



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES October 8, 2018 6:00 PM

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Police Chief Ed Andersen
Scott Blewitt, Recreation Director
Ernest Rowe, Police Detective
Joe Cardillo, Budget Committee
Maryann McEnrue, New London Resident
Vahan Sarkisian, New London Resident
Bob Bowers, New London Resident
Bob Brown, Conservation Commission Chair

Emily Cobb, Police Lieutenant
Laura Lorio, Recreation Commission
Stephanie Welsh, Police Officer
Jerry Coogan, Budget Committee
Tom McCue, New London Resident
John Raby, New London Resident
Peter Bianchi, New London Resident

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

Public Comment

Peter Bianchi inquired about a recent meeting with the Sunapee Sewer Department. Chair Rollins reported that an agreement was reached with regards to the percent of flow for the next twelve months; this rate is set annually. There still seems to be a challenge regarding some months and the calculations but in the discussion with the Sunapee Sewer Commissioners, they were willing to go with the median and disregard three of the highest month flows. The new rate is now 66.67%.

Bob Brown, Chair of the Conservation Commission, discussed a forestry project on Mountain Road that is progressing quicker than originally intended and would like to begin in the next few weeks. There is an intent to cut request form for the Selectmen to sign tonight.

Vahan Sarkisian discussed several rotting trees in town that could fall and cause damage to electrical wires and streets. He asked what the procedure is in this situation. Chair Rollins stated that there isn't a procedure when the tree is on private property. Kim Hallquist stated that she has written letters to property owners in the past, warning them there could be liability on their part if the tree falls and hurts someone or causes damage. Eversource is also interested in knowing about these trees and will sometimes take them down at their expense. If it's in the town right of way, the Department of Public Works will take care of it. Ms. Hallquist asked Mr.

Sarkisian to email her with the location of trees at risk so she can contact the property owners and Eversource.

Chair Rollins congratulated Stephanie Welch, newly appointed as a full-time police officer, effective October 1st. The Selectman signed her appointment and she will be sworn in tomorrow with the town clerk.

Old Business

Harriman – Buker Report

Chair Rollins noted that Will Gatchell and Judy Johnson of Harriman, were not available to attend the meeting; she asked for comments from the Board.

Selectman Kidder stated that she has given it a lot of thought and based on the cost estimates they have been given and the fact that the site isn't quite appropriate for a Police Department even if the property next door is acquired; she believes they should look for an alternative site. The Selectmen have done what they said they would do in 2017 and had a study done of the Buker Building. She stated money should be put aside for a future new site.

Selectman Helm observed that all options are on the table although 1B and option 6 were the two that addressed a stand-alone building and repurposing the Buker Building to make it suitable for the Police and Dispatch. It is still a lot of money and looking towards the future we need to determine if this would still be a suitable site for a Police Department. Selectman Kidder doesn't think it is. If Police and Dispatch are moved to another location, some of the issues with the Buker building could be remedied and it could be used for other purposes.

Chair Rollins stated five options were presented to the Board last week. She reviewed the costs of the project and the history as Ms. Hallquist provided a timeline of the Buker building dating back to 1983. Chair Rollins noted that if they choose to do nothing with regards to the full options, she thinks they need to address life safety and water mitigation issues. She is in support of 5-1, the minimalist approach, but even with that she has questions and will need more details. Chair Rollins also noted that they should find alternative space for the Recreation Department even if it's temporary. It does not satisfy the needs of the community as a recreation building. Chair Rollins has asked Ms. Hallquist to do a review the existing town owned properties and buildings that may prove satisfactory to house the office needs of the Recreation department. Also, review and analyze, including cost, potential space within the Kearsarge SAU building. And finally, review and analyze the cost of other suitable space within town buildings in New London that may not be owned by the town. Temporary space would be needed for the Recreation department if it was decided to move forward with any of the options and begin a major renovation to the Buker building.

Chair Rollins stated it is important to preserve the integrity of Whipple Hall. There are still some issues that need to be considered. Chair Rollins also noted that regardless of what is decided, she would like to move forward with purchasing the adjacent property, since Whipple Hall is used for town voting etc. and that property is important related to space needs in that area.

Chair Rollins asked for comments from those in attendance.

Robert Brown asked if a new site was selected, what would be a reasonable distance or radius from the existing facility. Chair Rollins stated she is not able to answer that at this point and an alternative would require a whole new study.

John Raby expressed his concern about the Recreation department and where it would go. Mr. Raby spoke with Police Chief Ed Andersen a few months ago about the lack of a bullet proof window, water mitigation, a separate garage from sally port, converting to renewable energy and the timeline. He didn't see anything in the report addressing these issues. Chair Rollins responded that some of the more detailed questions he's asking would be addressed when an architectural design is done. Adhering to police standards was taken into account when preparing this study. Renewable energy has not been factored in at this point, but more work would need to be done to look at this. Primarily the goal was to determine how much the taxpayers would be willing to fund and how much should be invested in the building. The timeframe is at least two years out.

Selectman Helm addressed the cost and stated that the numbers given by Harriman don't hold up in terms of what some other towns have done. He doesn't want to get into the specifics about cost but instead evaluate what the need is. The focus should be whether the needs of the Police Department can be reasonably met in this facility.

It was asked that Selectman Helm give an overview of what his thoughts were from the last meeting. He stated he would opt for either option 5-1 or 6 and wouldn't consider any of the options that had additions on them and either figure out how to make the existing building work or go to a whole separate facility. He didn't address going to a different site. If they went with the option of a separate building they would be able to clean up Whipple Hall and make it once again the building it was supposed to be, and it would also free up 2800 square feet of space that could be used for other purposes.

Peter Bianchi feels that 5-1 is the best option and more thought should be given to the space that would be repurposed. He is concerned about the cost but was reminded that these figures aren't accurate. He is not in favor of relocating the police department as it is centrally located. Mr. Bianchi asked Chief Andersen what the square footage is that he feels is necessary for the Police Department. Chief Andersen replied that he doesn't have the exact square footage. He was working with the options given to him. He is happy with the square footage in option six, 10,194 square feet, as it met all the needs. The flow of the building is the most important part.

Chief Andersen responded that people look at the community based on the population number but you need to understand what the population is made up of. This community is close to Interstate 89 and Route 11 and there is drug traffic along these routes. This is also a college town. He noted that when the facility that they are currently in was built it started out with what they needed, and then budget cuts were made so it didn't end up being what they needed. He would like to spend the time to find a location to get a facility that meets what they need and not based on population.

Scott Blewitt notified the Selectman that as of last Wednesday, the Center for the Arts no longer occupies a closet at Whipple Hall. Mr. Blewitt needed this space to store snow shoes and ice skates due to the donation from Village Sports.

Bob Bowers presented a drawing of option 5-1 and suggested finding out what it will cost to fix the major problems such as the HVAC, the water etc. He discussed the need to either come up with a plan that will work for the long term or a plan that will work until a new building is built. The building needs to work better for the Police while they are still there. Mr. Bowers stated if Harriman is going to produce something that the town can work with, they need to take what's there and figure out what to do with that, at a reasonable expense. The major cost of renovations will be the communication center and the HVAC system.

Mr. Bower has suggested from the beginning that you figure out what it costs to fix the building, find out what isn't up to standard but will work and find out what is lacking. This allows a good environment to work in and if the conclusion is that you need a new building you have time to do a real study of where it should be and what the need is. He suggests doing the essential things that make it livable for the Police Department. Mr. Bowers would like information on how they came up with the numbers used to determine cost.

Chair Rollins responded that Harriman has done an extensive study with Chief Andersen and the department. The 5-1 option goes into phasing and although it needs to be vetted further, provides a good amount of detail. She noted that Mr. Bowers didn't address the water mitigation issues and the fact that the entrance needs to be closed off completely. At some point, we may conclude that in order to make it livable space, it is so cost ineffective to do it we will do nothing for three years while it is decided to build another police station. It will come down to what the taxpayers are willing to pay.

Selectman Helm commented that the process has happened exactly as it should have. The Selectmen have agreed that they want to focus on the existing facility and what does that involve. At the next meeting, they will talk more with Harriman about the details about what can and can't be done. He referenced a chart from July 31, 2018 (*Building Conditions Summary Table*) which is a detailed compilation of what needs to be done in the building. A decision needs to be made about what we are willing to spend. There is not an easy solution.

Selectman Kidder stated that in the warrant article that was passed, it says "to conduct a study of the Harold W. Buker Jr. Municipal building and other sites to determine their future viability for Police and Recreation." They could not look at another site until they could ascertain whether Buker was viable the way it is. They have done that.

Peter Bianchi stated there needs to be a balance between the needs and wants of the Police Department. Chair Rollins replied that there are standards that are different for a Police Department and the risks and reasons for the standards need to be weighed out.

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

- Next Selectmen/Budget Committee Meeting – Monday, October 15th – 6 PM
- Planning Board – Tuesday, October 9th – 6:30 PM
- Conservation Commission – Wednesday, October 17th – 8:30 AM
- Solid Waste Committee Meeting – Monday, October 22nd – 8 AM

Items to be signed

- Accounts Payable Voucher
- Payroll Authorization Voucher
- Appointment Card - Stephanie Welch
- Change of Address – 48 Hall Farm Road to 60
- Notice of Intent to Cut Application – Mountain Road
- Applications To Use Town Property
 - ✓ Sydney Crook Conf. Rm & Town Common – On July 24 – 27, 2019 all day and July 28, 2019 until noon for the 52nd Annual Antique Show & Sale by the NL Garden Club.

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Temporary Event/Sale Permits

- Homecoming by Colby-Sawyer College, 541 Main Street, Friday - Sunday, October 12th – 14th from all day. APPROVED

Sign Permits

- Permanent Signs – Sugar River Bank, 196 Newport Road, TM 059-027-000. Two signs APPROVED
- Temporary Sign – By Woodcrest Village for a 24”x36” A-frame signs in front of Woodcrest on October 26th. APPROVED

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson, Recording Secretary
Town of New London