



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN / BUDGET COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING MINUTES
November 19, 2018
6:30 PM**

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Nancy Rollins (Chair), Janet Kidder and Bill Helm (Selectmen's Rep to the Budget Committee)

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rob Prohl (Chair), Joe Cardillo (Vice Chair), Phyllis Piotrow, Lyndsay Lund, Lauren Snow Chadwick, Chris Lorio, Mark Christensen

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tim Monahan, New London Hospital Ambulance Services Manager

Lisa Cohen, CFO, New London Hospital

Sandra Licks, Library Director

Linda Nicklos, Town Clerk

John Garvey, Library Trustee

Nancy Mahar, Library Trustee

Wendy Dumais, Library Trustee

Chair Rollins called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Phyllis Piotrow) AND SECONDED (Rob Prohl) to accept the minutes from the October 29, 2018 meeting. Selectman Bill Helm abstained from the vote as he was not in attendance. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

FY2020 Budget Review

New London Hospital Ambulance

Tim Monahan, Ambulance Services Manager, and Lisa Cohen, CFO from New London Hospital attended the meeting. Mr. Monahan stated their budget request is for \$175,329 and reflects a 3% increase over last year. Chair Rollins asked what this increase is based on. Ms. Cohen responded it is based on actual cost increases. The increases were actually higher, but they are only asking for a 3% increase.

Chair Rollins asked if any data was provided relative to the number of runs and average collection costs. Mr. Monahan stated they could provide this information if that would be helpful. Chair Rollins stated this information is helpful particularly when there is an increase. She would like to know how they derived at a 3% increase since there wasn't one last year and what that is based on in terms of true costs, runs and what is collected from insurance. Having

this detail would be helpful. Ms. Cohen stated they typically do a 3% increase year over year and there was one last year.

In addition to New London, the ambulance service supports the towns of Sunapee, Springfield, Newbury, Croydon, Wilmot, and Sutton. All of these towns received a 3% increase as well. The ambulance service can't sustain the losses themselves and need support for this service.

Selectman Helm noted that in past years, they have been provided with documentation of the issues which helped to explain the losses. There are people on the Budget Committee that are new so will need more detailed information to understand this better. Tim Monahan will come to the next meeting to provide additional information.

Selectman Kidder asked if some towns were subsidizing other towns. Chair Rollins felt this would be good for the residents to know as well. Ms. Cohen will provide the requested information to Kim Hallquist prior to the meeting so it can be reviewed in advance.

Selectman Helm asked about the Sunapee/Newport relationship. Tim Monahan stated there has been no movement there. New London has increased their staff and made changes in the way they utilize staff there. Mr. Monahan noted that the ambulance service is always open for future discussions. There have been issues between New London Hospital ambulance and Newport for many years.

Library

Sandra Licks attended the meeting to discuss the library budget request which included a 2.3% increase. Ms. Licks stated they tried to keep the operational expenses as close to last year as possible. A few line items decreased which included supplies, equipment, and travel/dues. Their request includes a 4% increase for wages.

Ms. Licks addressed the cleaning contract and stated it is not part of the appropriation request and is a separate line item. Without notice, this cost went up significantly. She would like to be a part of any RFP the town sends out to bring the cost down.

Selectman Kidder asked if the Energy Committee has come in to make recommendations specific to lighting. Ms. Licks replied that she worked with Jamie Hess, Chair of the committee, and brought in several lighting consultants to get pricing. The most recent pricing was half the cost of the previous estimate, but the money allocated for the smart start program is already spent for 2019. They would like to do a portion of the lighting project through their capital reserve request and then plan to utilize the smart start program beginning in August of 2020.

Selectman Kidder also inquired about the \$30,000 budgeted for upkeep and repairs -what does that involve? Ms. Licks stated this is various things including heating issues, small projects and preventative maintenance. Selectman Kidder feels this is a high number. Ms. Licks stated the library is an old building and she doesn't want to fall behind. It is important to keep up with it. Selectman Kidder asked if she used Matt Grimes, from facilities, for Library maintenance. Ms. Licks said very rarely. This past year she reached out for help with lighting ballasts but it was her understanding that he wasn't available to be used by the library. Selectman Kidder isn't aware of this and it would be more cost effective to use a staff member that we already have. The purpose of hiring him was so we didn't have to hire outside agencies and could do the work for less money.

Lyndsay Lund noted that based on research she did last year, the repairs and upkeep number is actually lower than average across the country.

Rob Prohl asked about the stack room project. The stack room is the biggest room in the library where most of the books are located and it needs new carpeting. It also has a section of roof over it that is flat that has leaked in the past and needs to be replaced. The labor involved in moving all the books and shelving will be costly. Mr. Prohl asked if there were any estimates related to this project yet. Ms. Licks stated they would spend up to \$50,000 for this project but has only gotten partial bids so far.

Chair Rollins questioned whether anything had been done with regards to fire suppression. Ms. Licks stated no. Chair Rollins emphasized that due to the amount invested in the building, it would be prudent to seriously consider it.

Finance

Wendy Johnson addressed areas of interest related to the finance budget.

- An audit is required every year and the amount budgeted for that is \$21,500. The town has used the same company for many years.
- Telephones have gone up due to a new system a year ago. The line now includes the internet service and it didn't before.
- The biggest expense is the computer license and fees. This includes all the contracts for the software the town uses.
- Computer support has also increased as it is expensive to keep the computers working.
- Leased equipment has gone up slightly due to a new copy machine.
- Advertising is up slightly as well. This number includes advertising for departments that don't have a line item for it.
- For insurance, the guaranteed maximum increase is 4.9%. It could potentially be less.

Town Clerk

Linda Nicklos stated that in the town clerk/tax collector office there were significant changes. The office hours were changed to include two Saturdays a month and closed to the public on Fridays, and this was well received. The tax collector position was assigned to Kim Hallquist. Gisela Rogers had her one-year anniversary in August and is doing very well. The November 6, 2018 general election showed a 70% voter turnout.

As part of the proposed budget, Ms. Nicklos is asking for an assistant. Ideally, the office would run more smoothly with two full time people but since that isn't an option, she is asking for an additional 15 hours per week. She would like to flex this time as needed. The assistant would help with elections, do clerical work and help with various projects. This would also help with time off for training as well as personal time.

The other item to note is the supervisors of the checklist would like to raise their pay from \$1,200 to \$1,600. This increase is requested due to the state procedures which change each year and require more training as well as new registrations.

Ms. Nicklos increased the election advertising by \$200. Miscellaneous food and supplies is decreased to \$950. Ms. Nicklos would like to increase the office supplies line item \$1,800 to purchase a fold and stuff machine. This would help with motor vehicle renewals, dog renewals

and delinquent property tax letters. Ms. Nicklos addressed the need to obtain a printer for the office at the approximate cost of \$650.

Selectman Helm stated he met with Ms. Nicklos a few weeks ago and went through budget. He is surprised and disappointed that this is a different presentation than the one they discussed. As they had previously discussed, he supported the assistant for 6 hours a week but does not support the new request of 15 hours per week. Ms. Nicklos apologized and stated that after their discussion, she felt that six hours a week was not enough. She would like to know what the expectations are for the town clerk/deputy tax collector as far as hours. Ms. Nicklos stated she is working a lot of hours even with the office hour adjustment and she can't sustain this without more help. Chair Rollins responded it was her understanding that closing the office on Fridays was done to create a catch-up day. Ms. Nicklos stated what is happening is that by closing the office on Friday, you have to do five days of business in four days. She also does work at home on Fridays.

Phyllis Piotrow stated there is confusion regarding the town clerk and tax collector. She has asked Wendy Johnson to provide budget numbers that show the personnel time and expense totals for these positions for 2017, 2018 and the current proposed budget amount to see what the difference in cost is. Are we spending more or less money by splitting these positions. Kim Hallquist responded that Ms. Johnson can provide the numbers but noted the numbers don't reflect actual time spent in the positions, only the way the amounts were distributed in the budget for each position – in the past it was split 50-50.

Selectman Kidder stated it was her understanding that the tax collector job was removed from Ms. Nicklos so it would free up her time and she could stay caught up with town clerk responsibilities. Now an assistant is being requested in addition to an employee that is already working 30 hours. Ms. Nicklos responded in retrospect, rather than removing the tax collector position, having an assistant to help with property tax payments and other responsibilities of the tax side would have been more advantageous to the office.

Selectman Helm shared that he spent several days observing the office and some days were busier than others. He then discussed the budget with Ms. Nicklos. He noted that there is only one window so no matter how busy it is, there is a space issue. Putting another person in there during busy times will not increase the throughput because there isn't enough space. What he was convinced of however, was that there are certain times that an extra person could be very useful. He supported the proposal of adding an average of 6 hours per week in that office. He stated the issue is trying to figure out how to get the job done efficiently within the hours that are there. Ms. Nicklos is trying to figure out how to take time off and keep two people in the office. Selectman Helm suggested that she ask her colleagues in all the other towns that only have two people how they handle this.

Lyndsay Lund suggested utilizing volunteers to help with some of the clerical office duties. Selectman Helm stated there are certain things only the town clerk/tax collector can do. Chris Lorio stated it will be difficult to find someone that will only work six hours per week. That isn't a sustainable position and will most likely have to keep retraining people. Phyllis Piotrow stated she has heard complaints about having the office closed on Fridays. Selectman Helm has heard very few complaints. Ms. Hallquist confirmed that some people do come in on Fridays, unaware that the office is closed.

Tax Collector

Kim Hallquist, Tax Collector, presented this budget. She explained that the \$3,000 in the budget is there in the event that the Selectmen decide to appoint someone else and this is allocated for a stipend; it was noted that currently the tax collector is an unpaid position. The appropriation for the deputy and part-time help is for Linda Nicklos who is the Deputy and also for outside help when needed, currently Linda Hardy is assisting.

Planning & Zoning

Kim Hallquist reported that they have gone from one full time person to two part time. Adam Ricker is the circuit rider planner from the Regional Planning Commission and is here two days a week. Our Zoning Administrator is here three days a week and this position is shared with Sunapee. This is working well.

Archives, Leave Time Buyout, Tuition Reimbursement, Insurance Deductibles, Energy Committee and Debt Services – All reviewed with no issues.

Motion to adjourn

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Chris Lorio) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson, Recording Secretary
Town of New London