



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN / BUDGET COMMITTEE JOINT MEETING MINUTES November 26, 2018 6:30 PM

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Nancy Rollins (Chair), Janet Kidder, G. William Helm, Jr.

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

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Scott Blewitt, Recreation Director

Ed Andersen, Police Chief

Jay Lyon, Fire Chief

Donna Larrow, Police Department Administrative Assistant

Tim Monahan, New London Hospital Ambulance

Linda Nicklos, Town Clerk

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

Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Rob Prohl) to accept the minutes from the October 22, 2018 meeting. Selectman Bill Helm abstained from the vote as he was not in attendance. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

FY2020 Budget Review

Tim Monahan, New London Hospital Ambulance

Tim Monahan attended the meeting to discuss the New London Ambulance appropriation request. Additional information that was previously requested was received. Selectman Kidder asked why the operating loss increased so much. Mr. Monahan noted that it was likely due to the increase of health insurance coverage for ambulance staff. He noted that if the Board wanted more specific information, he could get it. Bruce King had planned to attend the meeting but was unable to due to the snowstorm. Kim Hallquist noted that she spoke with Bruce King just before the meeting began and he stated that if the Board and Committee wanted to speak with him by phone, he was available. With regards to insurance payments for ambulance services, it is pretty equal for reimbursement among the seven towns.

Review budget to discuss any outstanding areas for review

Executive -Selectman Helm addressed a compensation issue. He doesn't understand why the chair of one committee gets a stipend and no other chair gets one. He recommends eliminating the \$500. There are a number of other proposals in the budget that give substantial increases to other volunteers

so he would recommend \$3,000 each for the Board of Selectmen as opposed to the current amount of \$2,000 each. Mr. Helm noted that the moderator has asked for an increase from \$600 to \$750 and Selectman Helm feels this is justified.

Town Clerk – Selectman Helm stated the town clerk has given a third proposal for her budget. He does not agree with the proposal as he does not think a full-time position is justified. He originally had agreed that additional hours would be appropriate but was not convinced a third person was the right way to go. If this is still a necessary need in this department then there are still 2-3 hours a week that the deputy could be paid without becoming a full-time employee. He is in favor of adding additional compensation for the deputy but not making that position full time. Selectman Helm concluded by noting that he did not feel that adding \$34,000 to the budget is something the town needs or can afford.

Selectman Kidder disagrees with Selectman Helm and feels they should go with a full-time person. There needs to be stability in that office and if we lose the person in the deputy position, we are back to square one with advertising, training etc. Selectman Helm does not think we can afford the \$34,000 in additional cost to do this and maintain the other obligations we have. He stated they are doing well with the new schedule and just need a few additional hours to deal with the occasional spikes in workload.

Chair Rollins agrees with Selectman Kidder and is tired of the rollercoaster they have been on and is concerned about the efficiency in that office. She is leaning towards a full-time employee at this point. She also asked if the folding machine is needed if there is a full-time employee. Linda Nicklos stated they can pass on the folding machine if there is another full-time employee in the office. If the printer and folding machine are taken out that would be a savings of \$2,450. A lot of the advertising was for help wanted so Selectman Kidder suggested they go back to \$850 instead of \$1,000 and Ms. Nicklos agreed. Chair Rollins asked why the ballot machine expense keeps increasing. Ms. Nicklos predicts this amount according to her invoicing. She is asking for \$2,550 but it should be \$1,500. This would be a \$1,050 savings.

Selectman Helm stated that if we adopt the proposal for a full-time employee, we need to relook at how we divide it between the town clerk and the tax collector. The person filling the job is not 100% deputy town clerk. They are doing primarily tax collection work.

Supervisors Wages – Selectman Helm does not think a 1/3 increase in wages is justified. Chair Rollins agrees so this will be left at \$1,200.

Finance – Selectman Helm stated he would leave the treasurer stipend at \$3,000. Selectman Kidder would like to decrease the advertising budget by \$700 bringing that line item down to \$2,500.

Tuition Reimbursement – Selectman Helm suggested not putting money in since this account has not been used for many years. All agreed to remove \$3,000.

Planning Board – Selectman Helm stated he understands the need for engineering review but feels it's not necessary to increase it since it seems after the fact. He isn't aware of any more significant projects coming along. Selectman Kidder stated these funds will be reimbursed by the developer. Ms. Hallquist stated if we expect expenses than it should be included even if the expenses will be reimbursed.

Zoning Administration – Chair Rollins wanted clarification regarding overtime wages. The Zoning Administrator has asked for overtime as there are some weeks that she needs to work more than 40 hours per week. This position is shared with Sunapee, and any overtime will be charged to the town incurring the expense.

General Government Buildings – Selectman Helm already addressed cleaning and electricity related to this section. Selectman Kidder wants to replace chairs, shades and window cords. Ms. Hallquist stated this could be taken from either town buildings maintenance or capital reserve for town buildings.

Emergency Management – Selectman Helm stated this has been presented and is well justified but if money needs to be adjusted due to the town clerk position this may need to be looked at again. Selectman Kidder feels it would be unwise to stagger the establishment of a CERT team. Chair Rollins agrees that given the number of events happening across the country this needs to be considered and is important.

Dispatch – Chair Rollins asked about new equipment. Chief Ed Andersen responded that they have purchased a new recording system that records all the video cameras in the police department. She also asked about uniforms. Chief Andersen replied that they are requiring dispatchers to be in standard uniform as they are the face of the police department.

Highway Department – Chair Rollins asked if now that we are fully staffed if the overtime amount could come down. Wendy Johnson stated no as this is mostly due to plowing so is dependent of the number and timing of storms.

Street Lighting – This has gone up as electrical costs are going up.

Health Officer – Selectman Helm would like to only increase this to \$3,500. The request was for \$5,000. Selectman Kidder is concerned whether or not the health officer will stay if the request is not granted. If there is a good person in the position it is important to try to keep them. Selectman Helm would like more data regarding what other towns pay.

Health Agencies – Chair Rollins is not in agreement with the Riverbend request. This is a community mental health center. The state is underfunding mental health centers but this should not become a town responsibility. Riverbend is a 501 (c)(3) organization and can effectively fundraise.

Welfare Officer – Again, Selectman Helm suggests only an increase to \$3,500 and feels the \$5,000 is too large of an increase. Selectman Kidder disagrees and stated this is a difficult position that deals with hard cases. Chair Rollins would like to research what other towns pay for this position as well.

\$10,000 was submitted under buildings in the capital outlay for Whipple Hall (chairs, shades, etc.).
\$50,000 was submitted for the library.

Capital Reserve Fund

Conservation Commission – \$0

Gravel Roads – \$100,000

New Energy fund - \$50,000

All other payments to capital reserves were approved as previously discussed, for a total of \$733,510 plus \$20,000 for the sewer capital reserve fund.

Selectman Helm stressed that stabilizing the tax rate is really important; with all of the changes discussed, there would be a 3.2% increase in the operating budget and there are still outstanding questions regarding the Health Officer, the Welfare officer and the town clerk position.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the budget with the changes discussed and with the stipulation that the Health Officer and Welfare Officer stipends be revisited. Nancy Rollins: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes, Bill Helm: No. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

Confirm upcoming Budget Committee meeting schedule

The first committee meeting will be on December 5, 2018. Ms. Hallquist stated the department heads have the schedule and she will send out the schedule to the committee members again.

Joe Cardillo stated the joint Budget Committee/Board of Selectman meeting process should be reviewed as he doesn't feel they were beneficial. The thought was that it would save time but that doesn't seem to be the case. Chair Prohl stated at the end of this budget process they can discuss this.

Motion to adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson, Recording Secretary
Town of New London