



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, December 12, 2018
7:00 PM**

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rob Prohl (Chair), Joe Cardillo (Vice Chair), Phyllis Piotrow, Lyndsay Lund, Lauren Snow Chadwick, Suzanne Jesseman, Jerry Coogan, Chris Lorio, Bill Helm (Selectmen's Rep).

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

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bob Brown, Conservation Commission Chair
Mike Gelcius, Conservation Commission
Lou Botta, Emergency Management Dir.
Donna Larrow, Administrative Assistant, PD
Michael Kennedy, Conservation Commission

Ed Andersen, Police Chief
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief
Ruth White, Conservation Commission
Maggie Ford, Conservation Commission
Mark Vernon, Conservation Commission

Chair Prohl called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Phyllis Piotrow) AND SECONDED (Joe Cardillo) to accept the minutes from the December 5, 2018.

Ms. Nicklos noted that she would like to clarify the statement she made as shown on page 4: "*Ms. Nicklos replied if they wanted to change the hours again that would be fine.*" She would like the minutes to reflect that she stated "it would mean changing the hours again" in response to opening the office again on Friday's.

Jerry Coogan noted that he was very impressed with the presentation by Jamie Hess, Energy Committee.

THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES WAS APPROVED. Bill Helm abstained as he was absent from this meeting.

Approval of Meeting Minutes of the November 26, 2018 meeting.

IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Lund) AND SECONDED (Joe Cardillo) to accept the minutes from the November 26, 2018 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.

Selectman's Report

Selectman Bill Helm reported that there was no meeting on December 3, 2018 and there was a short meeting on Monday, December 10, 2018 as there were only two Selectmen present, so he had little to report. He stated that the Board signed the agreement to continue to utilize the facility in Berlin for disposal of the town's solid waste; the price is unchanged from expiring 5-year contract. The Buker Building discussion was postponed until the next meeting. The only other item of business acted on was the Board agreed to close all town offices on Monday, December 24, 2018.

Budget Review

Town Clerk

Selectman Helm stated the minutes on November 26, 2018 accurately reflect the discussion that was held at the Board of Selectmen meeting, but he would review his comments for those who were not present. He noted that this issue is one of the few times when all three Board members do not agree: he does not agree with the majority to change the deputy position to full-time. Selectman Helm reviewed the history of the staffing of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector office and the April decision of the Selectmen to lessen the workload of the office by appointing Kim Hallquist as Tax Collector. The budget includes funding for a deputy tax collector and consultant services if needed. Currently former tax collector Linda Hardy serves on a consulting basis assisting Ms. Hallquist.

Selectman Helm noted that it is not clear to him what Ms. Nicklos expects to accomplish by having the part-time person go to full-time, when her previous three budget requests were for an additional 6 hours, then 15 hours per week. The full-time will be an addition of 3-8 new hours. Ms. Nicklos noted that she didn't ask for full-time in her first budget request because she felt that it would not be approved given her previous experience, but after talking with Janet Kidder who encouraged her to request full-time, she submitted the revised budget.

There was a discussion of quarterly tax billing and how that creates more work in the tax collector office and how voters at the previous town meeting affirmed their desire to keep quarterly tax billing. The tax collector position is appointed by the Selectmen while the town clerk position is elected; some towns have a combined position which is elected. Selectman Helm noted that the Selectmen have not yet had a discussion about the appointment of the Tax Collector or whether a change will be made.

Jerry Coogan noted that he felt the discussion of full-time or part-time is a management issue and the Budget Committee should approve the request and let the Selectmen decide how to manage the office staff. Joe Cardillo agreed and noted that the Budget Committee will look at the issue again next year and if the plan doesn't work as expected, another change in the budget could be made.

IT WAS MOVED (Jerry Coogan) AND SECONDED (Suzanne Jesseman) to accept the Town Clerk/Election budget in the amount of \$152,029. VOTING IN FAVOR: Joe Cardillo, Phyllis Piotrow, Lauren Snow Chadwick, Suzanne Jesseman, Jerry Coogan, Chris Lorio, Bill Helm (Selectmen's Rep). **VOTING OPPOSED:** Rob Prohl, Lyndsay Lund. **THE MOTION WAS APPROVED: 7-2.** Selectman Helm reminded the committee that his vote reflects the majority vote of the Selectmen.

Chris Lorio inquired about to whom the full-time person would report. Ms. Hallquist noted that staff that work in tax collection report to, and are evaluated by, her as Tax Collector and those that perform town clerk duties report to, and are evaluated by, Linda Nicklos who is the Town Clerk.

Tax Collector/Finance

Joe Cardillo questioned the line for tax bills. Ms. Johnson explained the line item is for the company that prints and mails the tax bills. He questioned whether that expense could be saved and done in-house if there is a second full-time person in the office. Ms. Nicklos explained that the tax billing service actually saves money in staff time and copy machine usage. There was a discussion of the \$3,000 in the Tax Collector line. It was explained that the amount will allow the Selectmen to offer a stipend for the position should they decide to appoint someone other than town office staff for the position.

IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Lund) AND SECONDED (Suzanne Jesseman) to accept the Finance budget in the amount of \$248,569. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Insurance not otherwise allocated

Joe Cardillo asked for more information on the Insurance claims deductibles; it was explained that the town's insurance policy is subject to a \$1,000 per claim deductible.

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Phyllis Piotrow) to accept the Insurance Not Otherwise Allocated budget in the amount of \$102,793. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Police

Chair Prohl questioned the training wages, noting that the line has not been spent in previous years. Chief Andersen explained that he balanced the overtime line and training time; the training is often done at overtime rates, when the needs of the department require more overtime, he adjusts the training schedule. Additionally, there are times when the officer may neglect to record that time worked was training. Lauren Snow Chadwick observed that there is now another person in the department and generally with more staff overtime will go down. Chief Andersen noted that if you look at the overage on overtime, and put that amount to the training wages, the two lines even out.

There was discussion of the computer support line item, a line that has not been expended in previous years. Police Chief Ed Andersen stated the computer company that they use has changed the way they are billing and it's now a flat fee, not an hourly fee. Between Dispatch and Police this will result in a \$14,000 increase for the upcoming budget cycle so that while previous years it has not been expended, he expects to have to absorb the overage in other areas of his budget.

Joe Cardillo discussed buying new police cruisers and asked when the next one will be purchased. Chief Andersen stated they have one on order. Mr. Cardillo asked if there is the ability to hold off on the scheduled purchase for next year until the following fiscal year. Chief Andersen replied that would put them off by a whole year rotation which means an additional 25,000-30,000 miles on a car. When the cars are over 100,000 miles the warranties start to expire.

Phyllis Piotrow discussed the content of training for the Police Department. She feels strongly that exercising good judgment is the most important qualification for a Policeman. She has asked in the past for information related to what the training is and if it focuses on judgment as opposed to other categories of training. Chair Prohl stated this isn't a budget issue and she can discuss this with the Chief privately. Chief Andersen stated if she would like to come to the police department, he will show her over thirty trainings that officers have attended.

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Chris Lorio) to accept the Police Department budget in the amount of \$1,181,739. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dispatch

Phyllis Piotrow questioned the radio repair and equipment repair and maintenance line items; asking for clarification as to why these are two separate line items. Chief Andersen stated radios can be just the base radios which are portable. Equipment can be all the items that operate it, battery back-up, towers, etc.

Chair Prohl asked what new equipment would be purchased this year as this was a considerable increase. Chief Andersen responded that this is for the recording system that allows dispatchers to see everyone within the Police Department.

IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (Suzanne Jesseman) to accept the Dispatch budget in the amount of \$429,576. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Fire

Phyllis Piotrow asked how many full-time firefighters are on staff. Chief Jay Lyon responded there are currently two and there is a full-time position (Training Officer) that was previously approved by Town Meeting but which has never been filled. They have had 910 calls so far this year.

Jerry Coogan asked how many actual fires they have responded to this year. Chief Lyon stated they typically respond to 3-7 building fires per year; the other calls are motor vehicle accidents, medical calls and house alarm calls.

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Lyndsay Lund) to accept the Fire Department budget in the amount of \$418,949 and \$270 for the Firewards. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Emergency Management

Phyllis Piotrow observed that the biggest expense in the Emergency Management budget is for the creation of a CERT team. Ms. Piotrow asked if there is a commitment given by the volunteers as to how long they are willing to stay on. Lou Botta stated no. He explained that there is an investment by the town with regards to training, clothing and equipment. His expectation is that team members would serve for a few years but there is no contract requiring a specific commitment of service. Items issued to volunteers, clothing and equipment, are expected to be returned. There is already a nucleus of people interested but Mr. Botta would like to expand this team. The CERT program is a federal program and is done through FEMA. This will primarily be in New London, but Mr. Botta is looking for volunteers from other communities as well. There was a discussion of Mr. Botta's former position with FEMA, over 26 years, and an acknowledgement that he has extensive experience in the area of emergency management operations and planning. Chief Andersen added that Mr. Botta's experience and knowledge is invaluable to the town and the town is fortunate to have him as its Emergency Management Director (EMD). Chief Andersen stated that this is the time to establish a CERT team since we have Mr. Botta as EMD.

IT WAS MOVED (Jerry Coogan) AND SECONDED (Lyndsay Lund) to accept the Emergency Management budget in the amount of \$23,595. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Conservation Commission

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Lyndsay Lund) to accept the Conservation Commission budget in the amount of \$18,705. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Conservation Commission Chair Bob Brown and members of the Conservation Commission attended the meeting to discuss the Conservation Commission's forest management activities and warrant articles the Commission would like to see acted upon at the next town meeting. Chair Brown noted that he made a presentation to the Selectmen and to the Planning Board previously. The proposed two warrant articles are:

1. A 50/50 split of the forest harvest project net profit. This means fifty percent of the profit would go to the town's general fund and fifty percent would go into the Conservation Commission fund.

2. A contribution to the land acquisition capital reserve fund. The requested amount was \$50,000 but the Selectmen were not supportive of this request. Chair Brown would consider a lesser amount but would also consider doing a petitioned warrant article if a contribution was not made. The Selectmen felt the fund has reached a level that is sufficient for what the perceived need is and also that any contributions would not make much difference given the cost of the parcels on the desirable lands list would require town meeting voters to appropriate more money to purchase it. Chair Brown observed that over the last 15 years, 6 years appropriations were made to the fund and 9 years there was no appropriation. He noted that the Conservation Commission would like to see at least something added to the fund each year.

Chair Prohl stated they have other projects that need to be funded so there are many items to consider. The Budget Committee will take up the issue of capital reserve funds at a future meeting and will take Chair Brown's comments under advisement until then.

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 19, 2018

IT WAS MOVED (Phyllis Piotrow) AND SECONDED (Suzanne Jesseman) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Trina Dawson, Recording Secretary
Town of New London