



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**Budget Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2016**

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rob Prohl (Chair), Phyllis Piotrow (Vice-Chair), Joe Cardillo, Colin Campbell, Bruce Hudson, Lyndsay Lund, Tyler Beck, Chris Lorio, Nancy Rollins (Board of Selectmen's Representative)

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Suzanne Jesseman

STAFF PRESENT:

Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief
Alison Seward, Energy Committee
Dee Doheny, Energy Committee

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

Approval of Minutes

November 30th, 2016

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the minutes of November 30, 2016, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

After some discussion, Mr. Cardillo opined that the minutes of a meeting reflect what is said, even if what was said was not actually correct.

December 7th, 2016

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Bruce Hudson) to approve the minutes of December 7, 2016.

Ms. Lund said she had made several points regarding dispatch that didn't make it into the minutes. Ms. Hallquist said the minutes reflect the substance of the conversations and don't need to state all that was said and by whom.

Mr. Cardillo suggested that his comments on the special detail revolving fund (page 5, 5th paragraph, last sentence) be amended to include the phrase: "and this could pose a problem", so that the amended sentence reads: "*There are fewer eyes on the figures if funds go into a revolving fund, and this could pose a problem*". There were no objections to this amendment.

THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Works Department Budgets

Solid Waste Committee

Mr. Lee referenced a hand-out to the Budget Committee regarding the addition of \$23,000 to the budget to hire a Transfer Station Consultant to help with recommendations to make the Transfer Station run more smoothly in the future. There are issues at the Transfer Station currently that vary from having more traffic come through each day than the station was designed for, to the certification of operators, to recyclable material being stored and handled several times.

Chair Prohl said if they have the study done and there are no plans to get a new transfer station for several years, how valid will the study be when they can move forward? This project is one that didn't even come to the Selectmen during their budget considerations. Mr. Lee said it is hard to get this project into the queue of projects. Whenever he mentions that they need a new transfer station, he is immediately asked what it is going to cost. They won't know what it will cost until they get this study done. He can't give a number. Over the last six years, this has been what has gone on. The topic has come up and has been rejected because he doesn't have details, such as the size a new station will need to be, and how much it will cost. This is something that needs to be put into the plan somewhere, even it is 7-10 years down the road.

Selectman Rollins recalls some discussion of exploring the efficacy of a regional approach; where are they in the scope of this? Mr. Lee said this has been part of the discussion; Bob Brown has taken the lead on this and has reached out to Sutton, Andover and Wilmot. One town is unresponsive and the other two have provided some information.

Chair Prohl agrees that this should be on the agenda at some point in the future. He wonders if this is the time to do the study; there are other large projects coming up that need to be addressed. Selectman Rollins feels they need to keep talking with the other towns. Perhaps they can put some money away now, recognize they need a study before moving forward, and plan ahead. She asked if it would help if a letter was sent from the New London Board of Selectmen to the other towns. Mr. Lee said this may be helpful.

Ms. Piotrow suggests establishing a Transfer Station Capital Improvement Fund for this purpose, which would include the engineering study and other things that need to be done. Chair Prohl said they have a Capital Reserve set up (2002 Transfer Station Improvements) which has \$70,681 in it. Ms. Johnson said this still exists and it can be expended by the Selectmen.

Mr. Cardillo said he has seen too many times where a town spends money on engineering studies, feasibility studies, etc., and they find out they can't implement anything for another 5-6 years, at which time they have to have another study done. They know they need a larger space. If they have to expend funds, they have the money in this fund. It seems most people didn't know these funds were available.

Mr. Campbell wonders if the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) could help with this. Selectman Rollins said they could approach the RPC about this. Perhaps if they find another town or two that would like to create a regional transfer station, the RPC could help bring everything together.

Ms. Piotrow opined that a regional transfer station would need to be very large and probably very inconvenient in terms of location.

Mr. Lorio asked Selectman Rollins about where this project is on the Selectmen's radar. Selectman Rollins said they haven't put it as a priority on their list but feels they need a feasibility study done. They are going to have to start thinking differently about these high ticket items.

Ms. Lund shared that other towns she has lived in contracts out for waste management and people are billed for trash pick-up. Perhaps our current system isn't the most economical or efficient means of disposing of waste or recycling to the highest capacity as opposed to using a larger corporation. Selectman Rollins feels they do an incredible job with what they have. There is an issue with safety at the current Transfer Station. The flow of traffic has to be a primary concern in whichever site they choose. Ms. Lund said two trucks may be able to take care of the waste and bring it to its destination instead of hundreds of cars doing the same.

Mr. Lee said they pay \$365 to have one truck of newspaper dumped. They don't make any money from it to recycle it but it saves money to do this other than to bring it to the landfill. Private contractors tend to raise their prices when a town gets rid of their trash equipment because they know the towns can't afford to get back into the trash "business."

Chair Prohl said the Selectmen will look into this further as it seems to be an issue that needs more discussion.

Ms. Seward asked if the fund referenced earlier in the meeting can be used for the study. Selectman Rollins said that Selectmen are agents to expend the fund and they will look into things to make sure the funds are still there. They would come to an upcoming Selectmen's meeting to discuss it further.

Sweeper Purchase

Mr. Lee said the loader he purchased this year cost \$68,000 less than the \$192,694 appropriated in 2016 Article 12. He has not been able to locate a sweeper for the appropriated amount of \$60,000. He would like to recommend using the savings from the loader purchase and purchase a sweeper they have their eye on for \$124,000 in FY2018. He has talked to Sunapee and Newbury who would be delighted to pay New London to come to their towns to sweep.

Mr. Cardillo said last year, Article 12 raised and appropriated \$252,694 to purchase a loader and a sweeper. They broke it down for \$60,000 for a sweeper and only spent \$124,000 on the loader. Do they not have enough funds with the \$60,000 and the \$68,000 left over from the loader? Mr. Lee said he has been told he can't use the funds left over without a new warrant article because the warrant was written in such a way to give figures to spend on each piece of equipment.

Ms. Hallquist said if the money was in the operating budget, he could spend it as he needed; when it is coming from the Capital Reserves, it has to be spent as the warrant was written.

Mr. Lorio suggests making sure enough funding is put into the new warrant to cover a sweeper that may cost more than the \$124,000; that specific sweeper may not be available by the time the funding is approved. There was discussion of possible leasing a sweeper to be able to get it during the current fiscal year. Mr. Lee said if they don't commit to the company by the end of January, he will lose the opportunity to get the sweeper he has in mind. He could lease it for \$60,000 and perhaps pay for it after the funds are re-appropriated from the Capital Reserve fund. Ms. Hallquist said a lease purchase could happen only if the funds came from the operating fund. The capital reserve states it is for purchase only, not a lease.

Town Buildings

Chair Prohl asked about the Town Hall Cleaning Services which saw an increase of \$3,300. Ms. Hallquist said this is for Whipple Hall which is seeing a lot more use. The cleaning service had to increase because of this.

Chair Prohl asked about the costs incurred under the Town Building Repair line item. Mr. Lee said \$7,000 of this was to put antifreeze into the heating system at Whipple Hall after it froze last winter.

Ms. Piotrow feels more funds should be put into the building maintenance repair capital reserve. Mr. Lee said the Selectmen have worked with him to put together a list of things that need to be done from this capital reserve fund. Some of these things include \$6,800 to update the electrical system on the Town Green from outlets on an Eversource pole, to an independent system. \$37,000 is needed for the roof to be repaired at Whipple Hall, and \$4,500 to paint the Elkins Post Office. There are \$69,000 in projects. Ms. Piotrow feels things need to be done sooner rather than later and wonders if the funds dedicated to the repairs are enough.

Academy Buildings and Repair – Mr. Hudson wonders if the entire amount would be spent. Mr. Lee said he doesn't know if he will spend it all, but more will be spent from it than it shows right now.

Mr. Cardillo asked about electricity; how does the Town buy their electricity? Are all their electric meters under the same umbrella? Ms. Johnson said every town building is under the same program, including the library. The street lights are separate but have changed to a new program with LED lights. They switch providers throughout the year to get the best prices but do get into 1-3 year contracts from providers.

Ms. Piotrow asked about the Pleasant Lake Dam Maintenance and Repair fund. Ms. Hallquist said they did spend some from this fund. It is for the gate at the dam. The last repair was close to \$2,000 and was paid in November. This isn't reflected in the budget pages the Budget Committee has.

Mr. Hudson asked what the Town pays for hydrants in the town. Ms. Johnson said it is \$33,000 which is \$250 per hydrant.

Cemeteries

Mr. Lee said the budget has decreased by \$1,200. They had money in the budget this year to purchase a mower, which saved them \$1,200 in the FY18 budget.

Highway Administration

Mr. Hudson asked about the \$300 for physicals. Mr. Lee said this is for people who need to have DOT physicals. Three people just had them done. The physicals used to be covered by regular health care providers who would sign off on their DOT cards, but this isn't happening any more.

Highway and Streets

Mr. Lee said there is a \$4,000 increase in upgrading dirt roads. The Water Department is replacing the water main on Pine Hill Road. \$4,000 is needed to buy and replace the culverts there at that time. The plan is to pave the road 2-3 years after that is done. They have tried to do this project along with the water department to save some money.

Mr. Cardillo asked about Tree Take-Down Service. Mr. Lee said they contract all tree removals. They have one person who they prefer, who charges \$1,750 a day which includes three laborers, a crane, and a chipper.

Ms. Piotrow asked about salt; Mr. Lee had said it was a different kind. Mr. Lee said it is the same salt; they buy under the State's DOT contract. Each of the three salt providers charges exactly the same amount.

Radio Repair – Mr. Lee said this hasn't been spent but is there in the event they need to be repaired.

Mr. Lorio said he likes the lighted signs around town. He wonders if they will use more. Mr. Lee said he likes them too and has been moving them around so people notice them more. The signs are \$2,200 each with solar chargers on them. He'd like to purchase a couple more and keep moving them around town. After a while the signs become almost invisible to people. All the new signs they buy now are highly retro-reflective. Mr. Lorio thinks they should increase the sign budget to purchase more of these signs. Mr. Lee said he would welcome this but didn't increase this budget himself because he was trying to keep the budget low. Ms. Lund asked if one of these signs would help with the school crossing area on Main Street. Mr. Lee said they would not be able to use the signs there; it is a State-owned road and the Town's signs are not permitted there.

Gas and Diesel – Mr. Lee said he hasn't touched these figures because one never knows what the prices will be. He'd like to keep them as is.

Drainage – \$4,176 was spent for drainage off of Seamans Road.

Street Lighting

The big drop is due to the new LED lighting fixtures.

Transfer Station

The Transfer Station budget has decreased by \$4,000 for hauling fees and a \$1,000 decrease for signs. Selectman Rollins asked about Grinding Brush. She wonders if they need the full \$8,000. Mr. Lee said he may be able to lower the budget; he has to look at the bill they just got. It is supposed to be for two grinding days. The man came almost two days and Mr. Lee wasn't sure what the total would be. This would be revisited.

Solid Waste Cleanup

The Town just received the bill for \$3,000. Another hazardous waste disposal event will be held, which residents are invited to participate in, and the Town will be charged for.

With regards to the monitoring of the testing wells for the old landfill, Mr. Lee said it is up to the State as to how often the pits need to be tested. He thinks it will be at least once a year, forever. Every couple of years there is a special round of tests. They also occasionally do a survey and report on the whole site. He feels they should leave the funding for this as-is. When asked, Mr. Lee said the parcel of the old landfill is about 10 acres. It would not be suitable for a new transfer station. It still has a lot of settling to be done.

Care of Trees

Dave Carey, Tree Warden, is the person who does this; this is his budget. This is for planting of trees, trimming, and maintenance of some of the Town's trees.

Sewer

Mr. Lee said they have increased the building maintenance budget by \$3,000 to paint the building and replace trim. They have \$400 in the building supplies line. The sewer users pay for all sewer expenses. A bill is sent bi-annually to the sewer users. They dropped the payment to Sunapee a bit because they have been aggressively going after inflow and infiltration. They have a company come in to seal manholes to help with infiltration. It costs \$500 to do one of these, which pays for itself in very little time, considering the amount of water it keeps from going into the wastewater lines. There are clay tile pipes that need to be replaced as they are cracked and cause infiltration. These will be replaced a little at a time.

The amount they pumped to Sunapee from the lagoons didn't really impact New London's flow percentage because it was a dry spring (less to pump) and dry summer (less regular flows).

Mr. Lee said they have one full-time person working for the Sewer Department. One person in public works splits the pager call (on-call) with this one employee. The Sewer Department is billed by the hour for extra help from the Public Works Department.

Mr. Cardillo asked how often people move from their own septic system to the town's septic. What do they charge to tie in and does it show as a revenue item when they do so. Mr. Lee said the Town's fee to hook up is a dollar per square foot of living space. The home owner needs to pay someone to hook it up directly. Every six months a bill is generated for the sewer users based on how much water they use.

With no other business, Chair Prohl asked for a motion to adjourn.

**IT WAS MOVED (Bruce Hudson) AND SECONDED (Joe Cardillo) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:53pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London