



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES Monday, December 17, 2018 6:00 PM

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

John Wilson, New London Resident	Joe Cardillo, Budget Committee Vice-Chair
Bob Bowers, New London Resident	Rob Prohl, Budget Committee Chair
Peter Bianchi, New London Resident	Jim Wheeler, New London Resident
Bob Harrington, Public Works Director	

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

Public Comment - None

Outstanding FY2020 Budget Items

Selectman Helm discussed the Capital Reserve fund and stated at the Budget Committee meeting last Wednesday, Conservation Commission Chair Bob Brown gave a presentation. Selectman Helm is concerned about the possibility of a petitioned warrant article that is not supported by the Board and he would like to avoid a debate on the floor at Town Meeting. He would like to propose that the Board approve the following capital reserve payments:

- Reduce the Energy fund from \$50,000 to \$30,000
- Reduce gravel roads from \$100,000 to \$60,000
- Increase Conservation from \$0 to \$10,000

This will result in a decrease in the total from \$150,000 to \$100,000 and this brings the budget closer to where Selectman Helm would like it based on the other decisions that have been made.

Selectman Kidder agrees with these suggestions; however, she is unsure about the reduction in gravel roads, pointing out that there are many people in the community that would like to see significant paving of the gravel roads. Selectman Helm stated that money can be added but it will depend on if the work can get done. Bob Harrington will work with Wendy Johnson to determine the feasibility of getting the work done and how much money is needed to accomplish this. The Board would like to accelerate the paving of gravel roads.

Health and Welfare Stipends

Health officer stipend - Ms. Hallquist noted that she did a review of what other towns pay their health officer but noted that not all towns require pre-approval of septic systems, and many of the towns that do require it have staff other than the health officer doing the approvals. Many have code

enforcement people do this, while in New London the health officer does it. Given the different responsibilities among various town's health officers, it is difficult to compare what other towns pay their health officer. Selectman Helm stated that given the information they have, he suggests leaving it at \$3,000. Chair Rollins is fine with that but from a functionality standpoint, she questioned whether zoning staff, a consultant or another town department could be doing the septic reviews and approvals.

Selectman Helm stated that given the information about health officers that do not do septic reviews, the \$3,000 stipend being paid in New London is reasonable. Selectman Kidder questioned who would take on this position if the current Health Officer resigns. Ms. Hallquist replied the Board would have to find another person to fill this role and preapproval of septic systems would still be an expectation unless that responsibility is moved to a staff person. Peter Bianchi noted that having the health officer do pre-approvals of septic systems is very important for the town to protect the environment. Selectman Helm stated they could also hire a consultant to review and approve septic designs and charge the applicant the consultant fee. Selectman Kidder stated not only does the Health Officer do pre-approvals, but she checks on it if there is a problem, and she also checks the water quality at the beaches. Selectman Helm stated of the three neighboring towns, the most that the health officer gets paid is \$1,500. They don't do the septic work so doubling that figure seems reasonable. Chair Rollins asked if research could be done to determine what we are charging the applicants and if this should be increased.

Welfare officer stipend – Selectman Helm noted after looking at the data, he is satisfied with the proposed increase to \$5,000. All were in favor.

Discuss Next Steps for Buker Building

Chair Rollins thanked Kim Hallquist and Bob Bowers for their recommendations. She stated all are in agreement that there is a need to address the short-term issues.

Bob Bowers addressed the memo he had submitted previously; he proposed that things be done in phases. First the mold problem is addressed, then determine the cost of making improvements to save the building and incorporate those processes to make it a better building. He then proposed that the police use the court space in Whipple Hall moving forward.

Mr. Bowers stated there should be a broader strategy for all the buildings in town. The Rec Department stated they would like to have the entire Buker building available to them if new construction was done for a Police Department. Whether this happens or not, it raises the question as to what the building would be used for if not for Recreation or Police. He distributed a handout that listed a number of questions that need to be addressed in the process of deciding whether new construction is appropriate and what it should be. Moving forward, if there is going to be new construction, it should be clear what the alternatives were and what went into that decision-making process. Mr. Bower suggested looking into the possibility of renting space from the SAU. He suggests looking at the big picture to make things work the best they can.

Selectman Kidder stated that last year at Town Meeting the Selectmen proposed purchasing property for a possible municipal building. The Harriman report hadn't been done at that time but the recommendation since that time is that the Buker building is not suitable for a Police Department. She suggests finding out how much land is needed to build a new police facility, estimating how much money would be needed and asking for the money again so if there is an opportunity, the Board could purchase the land for the town. The following year, she thinks they should hire a firm to design a police department on the property that is purchased. She would not do anything to the Buker Building other than fix the ventilation, heating and immediate issues. Once all of this is determined, then they can look at the Buker building to see how it can be repurposed. She doesn't suggest buying the property adjacent to the Police Department at this time.

Chair Rollins stated that the Board has an obligation now to make the Police Department as livable as possible. The mold, water infiltration and HVAC issues need to be addressed and the town will need to make an investment to do this. Dispatch should move into the Recreation Department space and Whipple should be returned to its full glory. There needs to be a long-range plan relative to all the town's buildings.

Chair Rollins pointed out that she has asked for a strategic plan from the Recreation Department for many years and has not received one. Whipple Hall is inadequate for recreation and should not be used for this purpose. She disagrees with Selectman Kidder and thinks they should investigate obtaining the property next door as having this property may be important for parking. She wants to make sure they continue making the upgrades to Whipple Hall a priority.

Chair Rollins suggested splitting up the Selectmen's meeting room in the Academy Building to make an office for the Recreation Department. Selectman Helm agrees with this and pointed out that other public property could be used for meetings in place of the current meeting space.

Selectman Helm stated he believes that the past has shown that a town sponsored community center is not going to happen, so any such project is now in the hands of the Outing Club. He pointed out that he spent a lot of time working with the SAU on space and although they are willing, it is unlikely the Board will decide to spend money to rent space for any purpose. At the conclusion of the Harriman study, the Board agreed unanimously that a new police station was needed; the timing is still undetermined, but it is clear the Board supports this. They are also unanimously committed to do what they need to do to make sure dispatch is properly funded, the right equipment is in place and they continue to be the dispatch center of choice for the region. He feels there is a lot of energy behind the efforts related to solar and other projects. He agrees with Selectman Kidder that there is still a question about parcels of land and it would be nice if they had land lined up, but the choices are getting fewer and they need the money to purchase it. He also agrees that they should pursue purchasing the land abutting the Buker building.

Chair Rollins stated that next steps would be to have Kim Hallquist move ahead with bids relative to the high priority list identified by Bob Bowers related to the Buker Building. She would also like Ms. Hallquist to investigate converting the Academy Building meeting room into office space. Selectman Kidder stated that logistically having public meetings at Whipple Hall is burdensome to the staff. She is also concerned that moving dispatch will be too expensive and doesn't see the point of doing that. Chair Rollins would also like Ms. Hallquist to pursue what steps are necessary in acquiring the abutting property.

Jim Wheeler noted that he agrees that there is no compelling reason to move dispatch and spend a lot of money to then tear it out later to build a new police station. He also doesn't think the Harriman study was what the residents of the town had in mind, commenting that he felt that it was oversold, and they used criteria that didn't sit well with him. Selectman Kidder responded that a main point in the Harriman study was that Buker was never designed for a police department; it's not that the building can't be used for something else, but they were adamant about saying that as it is, it would be foolish to pour more money into the building. Mr. Wheeler disagreed with Selectman Kidder's conclusions and stated the Board should have experts from the construction, drainage, building, wiring, etc. areas go in to determine its viability. He felt Harriman only saw dollar signs.

Selectman Helm clarified that for dispatch, he's not talking about making a huge move. It would be a few simple things such as changing the entrance and closing off the public entrance where the water issue exists.

Selectman Helm asked about road and bridge infrastructure. There are still projects on Goosehole, Pingree, Brookside culvert and a guardrail on Bunker Road to complete. He thinks waiting for the 2020 town meeting is late. Selectman Helm asked Bob Harrington to provide information on these

projects, as well as the gravel road paving discussed earlier, to the Board at the January 7, 2019 meeting. Mr. Harrington agreed.

Town Administrators Report

Ms. Hallquist provided the following report:

- A mold inspection was done on Wednesday at the police department and the consultant took samples. They will have the report by the end of the year.
- Norm Bernaiche and Kim Hallquist will have a meeting tomorrow regarding the GIS project which has been completed.
- The December issue of *Municipal Matters* went out earlier that day.

Committee Meetings & Reports

Selectman Kidder reported that the Planning Board met on December 11, 2018. They approved the Continuum development proposal for the Senior Living facility on Parkside Road near New London Hospital, with a number of contingencies. The subdivision will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Selectman Helm reported that the Budget Committee met on Wednesday, December 12, 2018. Bob Brown, Chair of the Conservation Commission, along with several members of the commission, made a presentation. The Budget Committee voted 7-2 to support the town clerk assistant position going to full-time.

Meeting Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2018 and the November 26, 2018 meetings. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes from the December 10, 2018 meeting. Helm and Kidder voted in favor, Rollins abstained as she was absent from the meeting. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

- Next Regular Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, January 7th – 6 PM
- Budget Committee – Wednesday, December 19th – 7 PM
- Energy Usage-Review Subcommittee – Wednesday, December 21st – 8:30 AM
- **Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24th – Town Offices CLOSED**
- **Christmas Day – Tuesday, December 25th – Town Offices CLOSED**

Items to be signed

- Accounts Payable Voucher
- Payroll Authorization Voucher
- Warrant for Wastewater Charges
- Veteran Credits
- Birthday cards
- Applications To Use Town Property
 - ✓ Whipple Hall – On February 27, 2019 from 6pm to 3pm & March 2, 2019 from 4pm to 8pm for a fundraiser by the Alzheimer's Association.

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Building Permits

Frank Anzalone Et Al, 20 Main Street, TM 073-047-000. Convert barn to office space. BP 18-088 APPROVED

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson, Recording Secretary
Town of New London