



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES December 19, 2016 6:00 PM

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

John Raby, *The Intertown Record*
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Donna Larrow, Police Department Administrative Assistant
Phyllis Piotrow, Budget Committee Vice-chair
Edward Andersen, Police Chief
Chandler Engel, Dubois & King
Rob Prohl, Budget Committee Chair
Jud Donaghey, New London Resident
John Wilson, New London Resident
Harry Snow, Snow Construction & New London Resident
Peter Bianchi, New London Resident
Bruce Hudson, Budget Committee

Chair Helm opened the meeting at 6:00pm.

Public Hearing: Request for Acceptance of West Side Drive and Snow Lane as Town Roads

Chair Helm opened the public hearing and noted that plans of the roads in question were posted for those in attendance to review. Chair Helm asked Harry Snow to present his request.

Mr. Snow proposed that the Town accept the roads, as built explaining that the roads have been inspected by all appropriate town departments and are 100% complete. Richard Lee (Public Works Director) said this request initially came up three years ago and Mr. Snow decided not to go through with it at that time. Mr. Lee has recently inspected the roads, and Mr. Snow has corrected the issues that were found.

Chair Helm asked if there was anyone present that wanted to speak to the issue of acceptance of the roads in question. There were none.

The Chair declared the public hearing closed.

There were no questions or concerns from the Selectmen regarding the acceptance of the roads.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) that the Town of New London accept Snow Lane and West Side Drive as Town roads. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Pleasant Lake Dam – 60% Design Presentation, Chandler Engel, Dubois & King

Mr. Engel said they are operating under a timeline that will insure construction can begin in the spring of 2017. He came prepared with copies of the design for the Selectmen and those attending the meeting. They have been working with DES on this and are happy with how receptive DES has been. The existing conditions hydraulics report has been approved by DES. Overtopping was an issue in their plan and DES has accepted the normal summer surface elevation for the hydraulic condition which is a big deal; there is a lot of storage available in a lake of this size. During the design storm, if they start with the normal summer level, and if a 2.5x a hundred-year storm event happens, it will fill the dam to the brim without overtopping. DES requires 1' of freeboard to accommodate for waves; the water is not static. Since they will not be protecting against constant flow of water over the dam, but rather just waves, they went back to DES to ask if they had ever approved a scenario such as this. They had not. Therefore, Dubois and King are proposing using a geo-cell, high density polyethylene material instead of concrete blocks. The material forms a net along the crest and face of the dam. The cells are filled with concrete which create a protective layer. This is all anchored with steel rods into the ground and in-filled on the crest with concrete and on the face with soil. The benefit of this is cost effectiveness; the material is a quarter of the cost of the conventional materials discussed earlier.

Chair Helm asked Mr. Engel if he has used this product in the past. Mr. Engel said he had not however there is a similar product called geo-grid that he has used, which is an evolution of this product.

Mr. Engel said another product they are thinking about is high performance matting material which is anchored with tenements into the ground. In terms of cost, these materials are significantly less. They think these solutions are safe and permittable and are cost reducing for the project. There are benefits and drawbacks to both materials having to do with aesthetics. Both concepts are acceptable to DES at this point in time.

Jud Donaghey said now they have two options as a town. The second option is to raise the dam 1' and not let it overrun. Before they got to this point, people indicated that aesthetically, a 2' increase in height was too much, but perhaps 1' higher would be acceptable. He appreciates that Dubois & King is being creative and is trying to save the Town money.

Mr. Engel said the crest is irregular with a slope. They are trying to level the dam to the high point. To do this there are some areas where the height has to be increased 18". They are trying to minimize any aesthetic changes, but they need to meet the requirements set forth by DES. Raising the dam 1' can be done but there would be further implications with this design; more fill and some impact to the pine trees they were trying to save.

Mr. Lee said he has read a lot about the materials Mr. Engel is suggesting and agrees that the expense will be less if they are used. He wonders if they could do blocks on the top of the dam instead of gravel; there is a lot of foot traffic that would wear away the gravel. He suggests doing the 6' strip across the top to be level, and do the sides with his suggested material. Mr. Engel said this would be the plan if they decided to use the matting material.

Dr. Wilson asked what the life expectancy of the geo cells is. Mr. Engel said 50-100 years, at least. The galvanized anchors he wasn't sure about. He said the anchors will be there prior to vegetation and after vegetation grows in, it will help anchor the cells even more. Mr. Hudson asked about the pitch on the top of the dam. Mr. Engel said the top of the dam has a 2% pitch towards the reservoir of the dam.

Mr. Engel noted the construction cost estimate he has come up with is \$309,000 with ACB's and using geo-cells. The largest change in the cost has to do with the use of these materials. Selectman Rollins applauds Mr. Engel on his due diligence and working with the State to try to save the Town money. The Selectmen were happy with the

use of these products. Mr. Engel informed the Board that he expects to have the permit application completed and submitted to DES by the end of January. Having this done will provide the Town with a more solid number to ask the townspeople for at Town Meeting.

Mr. Donaghey thinks it will be good to cost out both plans (using the alternative materials or the traditional ones) so they have a rough idea of the difference.

Ms. Hallquist said that February 8th is the Budget Committee's Public Hearing, any funding requests must be discussed at that meeting. January 23rd is the last Selectmen's meeting prior to the public hearing. Chair Helm asked Mr. Engel to attend the January 23rd Selectmen's meeting to give a firm number for budgeting purposes. Mr. Engel agreed.

Public Comments

There were none.

Old Business

There was none.

New Business

Notice of Receipt of Zoning Petition

The Board noted receipt of a petition to change the zoning district for specific properties on Main Street, near the intersection with Newport Road. The Town Clerk has verified that the petition contains at least 25 signatures. Selectman Kidder said this will be discussed at the Planning Board where they will make a recommendation.

The petition will be placed on the ballot for a vote at Town Meeting elections.

Memo from Public Works Director re: Sweeper and Transfer Station Consultant

Mr. Lee submitted a memo in support of the Solid Waste Committee's recommendation to hire a consultant to study the town's needs for solid waste disposal; he noted that the committee plans to come discuss their request with the Selectmen at a later date. Selectman Rollins said it was discovered that there are funds available for a consultant to study the New London Transfer Station within a Transfer Station Improvement fund that had about \$70,000 in it. She also noted that there has been discussion about a possible regionalization of solid waste disposal that she feels is worthwhile to investigate further. Selectman Rollins noted that safety at the current site is paramount and thus she feels a study should be done, but feels the Board should decide what they want studied prior to engaging a consultant.

Mr. Prohl said there is much to decide prior to having a study conducted. He wonders if the paper trailer could be moved elsewhere to cut down on people crossing the lane of traffic at the Transfer Station, understanding that this may be a short-term solution. Selectman Rollins said they need to discuss who they will talk with about regionalization but stressed they need to do something. Mr. Lee said they need to remember that this is a conceptual design for the Transfer Station. \$23,000 is the price for this basic design request; the original estimate was \$37,000 and the committee was able to negotiate it lower. Mr. Lee noted that it will likely cost more to study the issue from a regional perspective.

Selectman Rollins asked about the study done by the NRRA. Mr. Lee said that the NRRA study concluded that the traffic is bad and it is dangerous; he noted that moving the paper trailer has been considered in the past and it will not alleviate these problems. They have tried numerous different ways to try and keep the traffic flowing well and safely but nothing has worked.

Mr. Prohl commented that Shepherd Pit was suggested as a location for a new transfer station. Mr. Lee said this has been suggested. He said the Lebanon, NH facility is one that people should look at; it can expand and take more traffic than it needs.

Selectman Kidder would rather know where they are going to put a new station before they have a study done. If the Shepherd Pit is the site that seems reasonable, that is what they should focus on. A site should be determined before they spend money on an actual concept.

Ms. Johnson noted that the Transfer Station Improvement Fund is not expendable by the Selectmen, use of the funds must go before Town Meeting. The fund was established in 2002 and the Town has used the fund to replace roofs in the past but have not deposited any funds in several years. It was last used over five years ago. Chair Helm suggests having the Solid Waste Committee come to a future Selectmen's meeting to discuss what they would like to do. Mr. Lee said the current site is about six acres, only three of which can be used because of wetlands and the shape of the parcel. Ms. Hallquist was asked to get information on the Shepherd Pit and figure out the size and also how many property owners would be impacted by the use of it as a transfer station.

With regards to the sweeper, Mr. Lee informed the Board that he has been unable to find a sweeper for the amount expected: \$60,000. Chair Helm asked how long a sweeper is used each year, on average. Mr. Lee said they use it for about a month, total. The last time they had a company come in to sweep for them, it was \$14,000 and wasn't done when the Town wanted it done. When they had their own, they swept twice as much and did it when they wanted it done. The Towns of Sunapee and Newbury have expressed interest in hiring New London with an operator to sweep.

Mr. Lee said the State used to reimburse the Town of New London to sweep the State-owned roads which would pay for all the maintenance plus about \$300-\$400/year. Several years ago the State stopped paying and New London is now doing it for free. This Spring Mr. Lee anticipates putting another \$4,000 to \$5,000 into the current sweeper to get another year out of it. Mr. Prohl said they had discussed leasing a sweeper for \$60,000 and then purchasing it once the approval went through at Town Meeting.

Mr. Lee noted that a used, 2012 sweeper is \$140,000; he estimated a new sweeper at \$200,000. The Board asked Mr. Lee to look into the cost of a new sweeper, and the issue can be brought back to Town Meeting for the funds needed.

Notice of Receipt of Letter from John Lewis re: value of Colby-Sawyer College to the Town
Chair Helm asked Ms. Hallquist to send Mr. Lewis a note to acknowledge his letter.

Consider Request for a Veteran Credit Filing Extension

The Board reviewed a memo from Chief Assessor Norm Bernaiche regarding the late filing of a veterans credit application. The Board noted that they have denied similar requests to extend deadlines in the past.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to decline to extend the timeline for filing of the Veteran Credit. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Employee Health Insurance Rates for 2018

Ms. Hallquist informed the Board that CGI, the broker for Harvard Pilgrim, has submitted estimated rates for insurance. She noted that the Harvard Pilgrim and Tufts programs were shown and they were competitive costs but there are differences in coverage offered. She noted that the rates are computed on a "member bill" rate which means the age of the subscribers and dependents are considered. The town's current policy, from Health Trust, does not bill based on ages, the rates are all the same for everyone, regardless of age. In these new programs, older employees would pay more and younger would pay less.

Ms. Hallquist noted that she followed up on a newspaper article Chair Helm provided to her regarding the Town of Sutton paying 100% of the plan. She explained that the plan that the town will pay 100% of the premium is a site of service plan and none of the employees selected it.

Chair Helm said they need to think about the goal of the Town with regards to health insurance. Some plans are more flexible than others. He did not think the Town could live with a 10% increase in the healthcare costs this year. Selectman Rollins said healthcare is in flux and is only going to get worse. She is not pleased that it feels that Health Trust has the Town cornered into a 10% increase relative to health insurance options. She would like to find a balance between the cost to the Town and the employees. She is also interested in choosing some different plans and look at what other towns are opting for. She wonders what the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission is deciding to do with regards to their insurance; Chair Helm noted that he is not aware that a decision has been made yet.

Selectman Kidder said the costs for healthcare are only going to rise. She said they need to understand what plans the staff wants, determine the costs, and how much the employees are willing to pay to keep a certain plan. Over time they may need to get to where the employees increase their contribution by a percentage that is manageable; she feels this needs to be employee-driven. Selectman Kidder also feels they need to keep New London Hospital as an option for employees to use as it is a local hospital and the town should support it. Additionally, using a local hospital will make things easier on employees and eliminate traveling to other hospitals for services.

Selectman Rollins said all employers are looking to have equitable healthcare plans; networking and sites and service are relative to this solution. Concord's lab is open 24/7 and people travel there anyways and these services could be arranged together with personal trips. People can still go to New London if they want, they would just need to pay a co-pay to do so.

Chair Helm said he would like more information about things such as outpatient surgery; what are the driving forces behind the employee's choice of service plan. If the employees were saving 10-15% on their healthcare, they may be willing to switch. He asked for more information, for example if going to the free standing facility is covered in full, however if they go to a lab test at an outpatient hospital, it would be subject to co-insurance. What would the charge be from New London Hospital? The agent should be able to provide this information to the Town, which will go a long way in determining which plan employees would prefer.

Selectman Rollins said it is helpful to think that these plans will all change; they need to determine what the best value for the moment is.

Chair Helm said he would like to have the employees know that they will discuss health care plans at a meeting and invite them to be included in the discussion. Ms. Hallquist feels it would be most effective to have the employee committee discuss this first before a meeting. Ms. Larrow said the plan rates being offered are for January 1st and they don't know what the prices will be for the town's renewal date, July 1st, for a few more months. She doesn't feel that she could make a decision on which plan is best, even after sitting through these meetings; never mind the employees who aren't even really aware that there is a change being discussed by the Selectmen.

Chair Helm said the Selectmen have to save premiums and offer good plans to the employees. They will have to do a little guessing when it comes to budgeting and Town Meeting, because they won't know the exact rates in March.

He would like to have a broker come discuss the plusses and minuses of the plans at the meeting with the employees. They need to get a balance between cost and benefit. Chair Helm stressed that he does not want the recent employee wage adjustments be taken away by having the employees pay more for their health care costs.

Town Administrator's Report – Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator

Ms. Hallquist said a heating pipe in the children's area of the library burst on Sunday. The insurance company was notified and personnel were on site on Sunday to clean up and begin repairs.

Ms. Hallquist said the employee party was on December 9th and was a success.

Ms. Hallquist noted that the Board of Selectmen has been invited to the Lake Sunapee Chamber of Commerce annual meeting at Colby-Sawyer College.

Ms. Hallquist reported that New London made their County payment the previous Friday which was over \$3.3 million dollars. The Selectmen plan to attend a meeting with the County Commissioners on January 24th. They will be first on the agenda.

Committee Meetings and Reports

Tri-Town Assessing

Selectman Kidder said the Tri-Town assessing was held. There will be no revaluations for 2017 or 2018 as all three towns have been completed. They will begin again in 2019 with New London. There were not a lot of issues with Newbury's just completed revaluation.

Planning Board

Selectman Kidder said at the last Planning Board meeting, there were some tree cutting applications, the Colonial Pharmacy site plan was approved, and a horticulture and horse farm was approved for Tim and Lizette Slater on Shaker Road.

NHMA Board of Director's Meeting

Selectman Rollins said there are a number of legislative service requests (LSR) regarding municipalities and towns. LSR 75 is relative to payment by the State of retirement system contributions. The State used to pay 35% of towns retirement costs for police and fire, now the State pays nothing. The representative is going to request 15%. In a meeting with the Board of Directors with governor-elect Sununu, he said he was open to considering 7-10% requests. There is some movement to try to work on this.

Selectman Rollins suggests that at some point they have a meeting with their legislative delegation. The Governor- elect will submit his budget on or around February 15, 2017. There are almost 800 LSRs which is interesting because it is a non-policy year. It might be helpful to meet with all three delegates to talk about what is important to the Town.

The upcoming Selectmen meetings were Monday, February 6 at 6pm, and Tuesday, February 21st at 6pm. The representatives would be asked to attend one of these meetings.

Chair Helm said he went to a meeting in Concord with two representatives from the Planning Board and Lucy St. John (Planning & Zoning Administrator) on engaging community involvement in planning. Bill Dietrich is getting ready to lead a major movement on this next year.

Review of Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of December 7, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Upcoming Meetings and Special Events

- Next Regular Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, January 9th - 6:00 PM
- Budget Committee – Wednesday, December 21st – 7:00PM
- Planning Board – Tuesday, December 13th - 6:30PM
- Conservation Commission – Wednesday, December 21st - 8:30 AM
- Recreation Commission – Tuesday, January 3rd – 5:00 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- **The Transfer Station will close at NOON on Saturday, December 24th and will be closed on Sunday, December 25th**
- **Town Offices will be CLOSED on Monday, December 26th.**

Other Business

Chair Helm indicated that Mr. Lee has submitted a letter to the Selectmen to indicate he will retire in December, 2017. Chair Helm said Mr. Lee has been an honest broker, a friend to the Town and has put up with a lot and has done it cheerfully. He will miss Mr. Lee a lot.

Mr. Lee said he decided it was time to leave after last week's Budget Committee meeting. He was upset by the Transfer Station discussion and was frustrated. He has put his time in, is old enough, and is ready to let someone else take over. He has made a career out of trying to get the most done for the Town of New London the least expensive way possible.

Selectman Rollins said she knows it is a challenge working in government and it is the nature of the beast. She understands when it is time to get done. She really appreciates the lead time he is giving the Town and hopes he participates with them in the search. Mr. Lee said he feels it is fair to do this and he is willing to help with the transition. He loves the job but not the politics.

Selectman Kidder said Mr. Lee has been an amazing leader and director of the Public Works Department; they are so fortunate to have had him for 43 years working for the Town. He has never given them an opinion on anything unless he was right. She can't say enough about how much she respects and admires him for the job he has done for the Town of New London.

Mr. Lee said he has worked with many good boards over the years; the Town has been fortunate to have some really good people in those seats and is why New London is the way it is. And the employees are some of the best around. He would put his department up against any other Public Works Department in the State of NH.

Mr. Raby said he has been enormously impressed with the work Mr. Lee's crew has done with slender resources. He and his crew are the best public works outfit he has ever seen.

Items to be signed

- Pay Authorization Voucher by Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer
- Accounts Payable Voucher by Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer
- Birthday cards for employees
- NH Warrant Yield Tax Levy for \$81.89 to Linda Nicklos, Tax Collector

Approved Building Permits

- Donald & Andrea Foster, 62 Woodland Trace, TM 094-017-000. Adding a 10" X 16" shed. BP 16-143.
Approved 12/16/2016

Approved Sign Permits

- Dunkin Donuts by Mary Stanton DBA Dasco Signs at 217 Main Street, TM 073-081-000 (sign 1)
- Dunkin Donuts by Mary Stanton DBA Dasco Signs at 217 Main Street, TM 073-081-000 (sign 2)
- CB Coburn Fine Gifts and Candy, LLC by Karen Conway at 374 Main Street, TM 084-003-000
- Lake Sunapee Bank by Wood & Wood Signs for 116 Newport Road, TM 059-029-000

With no other business, Chair Helm called for a motion to adjourn.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London