



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
December 6, 2017
6:30 PM**

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rob Prohl (Chair), Phyllis Piotrow (Vice Chair), Joe Cardillo, Lyndsay Lund, Chris Lorio, Bruce Hudson, Nancy Rollins (Selectmen's Rep). Absent: Suzanne Jesseman & Tyler Beck

STAFF PRESENT:

Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Ed Andersen, Chief of Police
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief
John Wilson, New London Resident
Linda Nicklos, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Jo-Ann Roy, Assistant Director, Tracy Library

Chair Prohl called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Approval of meeting minutes

Some committee members noted that they had not had an opportunity to review the minutes prior to the meeting.

IT WAS MOVED (Bruce Hudson) AND SECONDED (Joe Cardillo) to defer approval of the meeting minutes until the next meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Selectmen's Report

Selectman Rollins reviewed the Selectmen's budget by first reporting that the Selectmen approved a 1% COLA for all town employees and the Board will follow the step plan which calls for increases on the employee's anniversary date if the evaluation is acceptable. She noted that the Board was in agreement to keep the tax rate as low as possible and made decisions with that goal in mind. Selectman Rollins then reviewed the Selectmen's budget as compared to the original request, noting that she has asked Ms. Johnson to provide the same summary to the Budget Committee.

Phyllis Piotrow noted that social security increase is 2% and the Board is only giving 1%, which makes the town lag behind as has been the case in the past.

Selectman Rollins review the department totals:

Executive: The original request of \$303, 028 was reduced to \$296,998, noting there was some work done to reduce that area.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: The original request of \$86,135 was reduced to \$69,823 because the Selectmen did not support the request to go to a full-time deputy for the office.

Finance: The original request of \$291,761 was reduced to \$275,486. There was a significant amount of conversation around the issue of advertising budgets that are in various departments.

Ms. Piotrow asked if Committee members should ask questions as Selectman Rollins went through the items. Chair Prohl noted that first Selectman Rollins should go through a review without questions. Selectman Rollins agreed and noted that the Committee should decide on a process and then they can go through the budgets line-by-line.

Selectman Rollins continued her review of the Selectmen's budget:

Assessing: \$99,214, no change.

Legal: \$25,500, no change – Selectman Rollins noted that there is no significant cases in court at the moment, but it is difficult to know whether cases will be filed against the town.

Personnel Admin: The original request of \$107,945 was reduced to \$103,766.

Zoning & Planning: The original request of \$146,858 was reduced to \$140,615. Selectman Rollins noted there is a significant increase from the prior year due to the zoning role and planning roles being split between two people.

Buildings: The original request of \$179,240 was reduced to \$176,240.

Cemetery: The original request of \$31,587 was increased to \$31,886.

Other Insurance: \$104,419, no change. Includes property liability insurance

Advertising & Regional Association: \$18,473, no change. This account includes the Regional Planning Commission and Chamber of Commerce.

Police: The original request of \$1,225,149 was reduced to \$1,168,631. The Selectmen agreed with the Chief that a 9th officer is needed at this time pointing to officer quality of life, ability to double up on coverage, better distribution of officers over the shifts and will also have a significant impact on reducing overtime. She pointed out that the town's location on two major roads means more drug issues in town. She also noted the difficulty in hiring police officers in the area, this 9th officer will help to keep the officers the town has.

Fire: The original request of \$422,349 was reduced to \$407,138. It was not that \$16,500 for radio was removed from the operating budget as they will be purchased using capital reserve funds instead.

Firewards: \$270, no change.

Emergency Management: \$5,040, no change. The request is lower from the year before which included a one-time purchase of a storage container.

Dispatch: The original request of \$414,443 was reduced to \$412,855.

Highway Administration: The original request of \$900,338 was increased to \$917,978.

Highway & Streets: \$495,600, no change.

Street Lighting: \$8,500, no change.

Transfer Station: The original request of \$396,919 was increased to \$397,010 due to salary increases from COLA.

Solid Waste: \$18,000, no change.

Health Administration: \$5,337, no change.

Health Agencies: The original request of \$213, 320 was reduced to \$218,278. This account includes the ambulance, COA, VNA and CASA; the ambulance came in slightly higher than originally estimated.

Welfare Administration: \$3,349, no change.

Inter-Gov Welfare: \$6,000, no change.

Welfare Payments: \$16,000, no change.

Recreation: The original request of \$217,755 was reduced to \$184,412. The original budget included additional staff including a waterfront supervisor and a year-round administrative assistant. The Board did not support a year-round administrative assistant and suggested that Scott should hire someone only for the busy months, and have the cost come from the revolving fund. Also, some equipment, like buoys, was taken from the budget to be funded using the revolving fund. Selectman Rollins noted that the Selectmen also supported having a head life guard to add supervision at the beaches and an increase in lifeguard hourly rates.

Library: The original request of \$545,870 was reduced to \$540,670. The Selectmen have a significant caveat in that the Board got the libraries salary list at the last meeting and the Board has concerns about their salary as compared to the other town employees. The library did its own salary study and implemented the salary change over two years; the Selectmen are not sure that it was done with the same equity as was done by the Selectmen.

Patriotic Purposes: \$300, no change.

Archives/Culture: \$1,000, no change.

Conservation: \$16,306, no change.

Energy Committee: \$450, no change.

Other Conservation: The original request of \$24,500 was reduced to \$24,400.

Debt service principal: \$328,203, no change.

Debt service interest: \$83,730, no change.

Capital Reserves (CRF): will be discussed at a future meeting when the Budget Committee is provided with the CRF sheets.

Lyndsay Lund asked for clarification on the recreation administrative assistant, noting that it was not full-time, it was a part-time, year-round position. Selectman Rollins agreed that that is accurate.

Phyllis Piortow pointed out that the Selectmen have no jurisdiction over the library budget it is up to the Library Trustees to prepare it, but the Budget Committee can change it.

Budget Committee Vacancy

Chair Prohl noted that the Budget Committee had previously voted not to fill the vacancy created when Colin Campbell resigned and Joe Cardillo asked that the committee revisit the issue. Mr. Cardillo noted that he spoke with the Town Administrator concerning the law on vacancies and he was told that the law says the Budget Committee shall fill the vacancy by appointment. He also questioned whether the meeting when the Budget Committee decided not to fill the vacancy was an official meeting of the committee. Chair Prohl noted that he was under the impression that the vacancy did not have to be filled until Town Meeting after speaking with Ms. Hallquist and with Selectman Chair Bill Helm. Ms. Hallquist noted that she did not say that the vacancy did not have to be filled; she did point out that for appointed budget committee's the moderator only has 5 days to fill the vacancy, and while there is no such time period for the elected budget committee to fill the vacancy, it is important to consider that the New London voters want to have a 10 member budget committee and her recommendation was to fill the seat so that there is a 10 person committee. Mr. Prohl asked Selectman Rollins for her opinion; Selectman Rollins noted that he experience in state government is that when a law says "shall" it means it must be done.

Ms. Lund felt strongly that bringing back an issue that has already been decided is not a good idea. Ms. Piotrow noted that all of the presentations have been completed so appointing someone now, who has not attended those presentations, would not be ideal since they would not have the benefit of that information.

Joe Cardillo noted that in the past, the budget committee has always appointed someone to fill a vacancy and he felt that since the voters want a 10 member budget committee a replacement should be appointed. Ms. Hallquist noted that the meetings of the Budget Committee were held in public and were properly posted and minutes were taken; the minutes of the vote not to fill the vacancy were prepared by Chair Prohl.

Chris Lorio asked what process the committee would use to fill the position as he knows people who would like to join the committee and there are others who ran and didn't win and they could be considered as well. John Wilson noted that in the past the committee has appointed the person who got the next most votes in the election and that would be Jerry Coogan. The committee noted that Jerry Coogan has expressed interest in being appointed by a letter to the Budget Committee.

IT WAS MOVED (Joe Cardillo) AND SECONDED (Bruce Hudson) to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Colin Campbell to bring the committee to a full complement of ten members. A vote was called on the motion to fill the vacancy: YES: Joe Cardillo, Nancy Rollins, Bruce Hudson. NO: Rob Prohl, Lyndsay Lund, Phyllis Piotrow, Chris Lorio. THE MOTION FAILED.

The committee discussed a schedule to review of the department budgets.

Phyllis Piotrow asked about the Solid Waste study and the sewer lagoons and whether the projects would impact the budget. Richard Lee noted that those items, if additional work is planned for FY2019, would likely come from capital reserve funds, not the operating budget.

Dates for various department reviews were set:

December 13th:

- a) Administration, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Elections and Registration, Finance, Insurance, Assessing, Legal, Planning and Zoning
- b) b.Public Works -Highways, Sewer, Transfer Station, Cemeteries, Town Buildings
- c) Fire Department.

December 20th –

- a) Police,Dispatch, Emergency Management
- b) Recreation

January 3, 2018

- a) Library
- b) Archives,Patriotic Purposes,
- c) Conservation
- d) Health Admin, Welfare, Non-Profits.
- e) If time permits, Capital Reserve Accounts

January 17, 2018- Finish CRF, Bonded Debt Principal/Interest, Transfer to Out of, Revenues, TANS

January 22, 2018. Reconciliation meeting with Selectman if Needed

January 24th, if needed

February 7, 2018- Public Hearing, and if needed, February 8th.

Lyndsay Lund asked for clarification of the law on a committee member who wants to get information from a department head, and whether it is allowed. Ms. Hallquist noted that members could ask department heads questions to educate themselves, however the law does not allow a quorum of the board to act outside a meeting so members should not be discussing the information they learn with others, outside of the meeting.

Phyllis Piotrow handed out an editorial from the December 1st Valley News, "Crime Fighters: An Alternate Approach Works" reprinted from the Charlotte Observer that she felt was interesting and asked that her committee members read it as well. She noted that while she was sympathetic with the needs of Ed Andersen for more assistance especially approaching cars late at night, there are other issues to consider as well.

Selectman Rollins noted that as stated, the committee has set aside four meetings to complete the budget, and she questioned if that would be enough for the committee to do its due diligence on the budget. Chris Lorio noted that he expected the upcoming meetings to be more efficient since they have already heard all of the presentations. Ms. Piotrow noted that she was quite impressed with the Selectboard's budget review and how Chair Helm guided the process in an expeditious and thorough manner and it seemed to work well. Selectman Rollins noted that it worked well in part because each board member did their homework prior to the meeting.

Selectman Rollins asked for clarification of the timing of the future Budget Committee meetings. After discussion, 6:30PM is the starting time for future meetings.

Bruce Hudson questioned the item on the agenda: *Guidelines for Municipal Appropriations to Social Service Agencies*. Chair Prohl noted that the Selectmen adopted a policy for considering requests for funding from social service agencies. Ms. Piotrow noted that she is concerned that it does not allow for funding of cultural activities, which she feels are important to the community.

IT WAS MOVED (Bruce Hudson) AND SECONDED (Lyndsay Lund) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Hallquist

Town Administrator