



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

April 4, 2016
6:00 PM

PRESENT:

Bill Helm, Chair
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Patricia Denny, Northern New England Repertory Theatre
Terri Bingham, New London Resident
Renate Kannler, New London Resident
Mark Wendling, New London Resident
Richard Lee, Public Works Director & Sewer Lagoon Committee Member
John Wilson, Sewer Lagoon Committee Member
Paul Currier, Sewer Lagoon Committee Member
Peter Bianchi, Sewer Lagoon Committee Member

Chair Helm opened the meeting at 6:00pm.

Patricia Denny – Sign Permit

Ms. Denny met with the Board to request reconsideration of the Board's denial of her groups sign permit application. She explained that the Northern New England Repertory Theatre (NNEREP) is scheduled to have a performance at Whipple Hall and they would like to have a sandwich board sign on the corner of Seamans Road and Main Street to help people locate the venue (the proposed sign was shown to the Board). Center for the Arts uses this type of sign for its events. Ms. Denny noted that the sign regulations in the zoning ordinance are confusing and she suggested they might benefit from review. She understands that the town doesn't want a lot of signs at that location but wondered if she could put the sign up right before each performance. She also suggested possibly adding some signage to Whipple Hall to help people find Whipple Hall and direct them towards the entrance.

Chair Helm asked Ms. Hallquist about the reason for the denial. Ms. Hallquist said the Center for the Arts falls under the Town's Recreation Department which is exempt from the sign ordinance. The NNEREP is a non-profit and does not own the property, so their sign is not allowed on town property. Ms. Hallquist noted that currently the Information Booth is where the Board has traditionally allowed sandwich board signs. Ms. Denny understands this, and suggests the building be marked in some way as currently, it is not well marked. Chair Helm said one can interpret that the "premises" is Whipple Hall; it doesn't say that the property has to be owned by the party wishing to use a sign. He noted to Ms. Denny that last year the Planning Board recommended changes to the sign ordinance but the proposed changes were defeated at Town Meeting.

Chair Helm asked what the downside would be to keep the sign up for the three days of the shows. There were no objections from the other selectmen.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to allow the NNEREP to keep their sign up on April 29, 30, & May 1 an hour prior and removal upon conclusion of the performances. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Comments

There were none.

Old Business

There was none.

New Business

Request from the Baptist Church to allow use of Whipple Hall for overnight stay by visiting nonprofit group

Terri Bingham met with the Board to present the application on behalf of the Baptist Church, which is hosting the group of bikers, "Bike and Build". She explained that the group consists of people that go around the country on bicycle (about 3,000 miles) and build/repair homes to bring awareness to affordable housing. The Baptist Church usually houses a group that comes from Concord, NH. The bikers are provided dinner, sleep in the church, and use the showers. The group usually arrives mid-week but this year they are coming on a Saturday into a Sunday, which is not a good time for the church as they have church services on Sunday and VBS starting that week. The request is that the students sleep at Whipple Hall. The church will still provide for the showers and food. The bikers are willing to do a free bike clinic on June 18th in the town and Scott Blewitt is interested in this. Ms. Bingham wonders if the Town could waive the fee for the use of Whipple hall since the Bike and Build group is a 501(c)3 organization. Also, they will be providing a free bike clinic, which is a benefit to the town.

Selectman Rollins asked how many people would be sleeping at Whipple Hall. Ms. Bingham said 30-35 bikers between the ages 18-25. They are all wonderful kids who are responsible and helpful. Ms. Hallquist said neither she nor Mr. Blewitt have an issue with this request.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the request from the First Baptist Church on behalf of "Bike and Build" for the use of Whipple Hall for the night of June 18th. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Sewer Lagoon Committee Report

Mr. Bianchi informed the Board that he dropped off copies to the Town Office of the proposal for the sewer lagoon closure. He feels what they have done so far has been a giant step in getting the lagoons closed at a reasonable cost, and with the help of experts. The committee began by thinking that they may be able to do most of the work themselves. They later found that they would need the help of professional contractors to do the work. RMI was suggested by Richard Lee. Northern New England Field Services (NNEFS) is working with RMI on the project. Paul Currier, retired employee of DES, helped form a list of chemicals they should test for in the lagoons. Eastern Analytical is testing for these chemicals currently. As far as funding goes, they have about \$20,000 in the sewer lagoon capital reserve fund and about \$80,000 has been earmarked for this project from the \$460,000 bond approved at Town Meeting. Mr. Bianchi noted that the price that the town now has a quote on, which is under \$300,000, is less than originally anticipated. He thinks the sewer lagoon committee would have asked for more money at Town Meeting had they known what the total would be. The previous quote the Town had from another company was over \$800,000.

Mr. Bianchi feels it would be wise to hire RMI and NNEFS to start the work as soon as possible. The Sewer Lagoon Committee has met with the contractors and it seems that they are capable and ready. He feels it would be

great to get it done in one year, weather permitting. Additional funding would be required. Mr. Bianchi noted that preparation of the closure plan and oversight of the project would be done by RMI for \$20,000.

Paul Currier said he agrees with Mr. Bianchi. They had a great meeting with RMI and NNEFS where they created a third draft, which became their final. He said this plan is one that the State will accept and he has confidence that the project will go through.

Mr. Lee said both companies are quality contractors and he has met with them before to discuss this project. They are also the only two companies that regularly do this kind of work. Mr. Bianchi said it was a very helpful suggestion of Mr. Lee to bring these companies in to help.

Dr. Wilson said each time they have the companies come to the location to mobilize, it is \$12,400. Therefore, he would like to get the work done this year. Also, Mike Rainey is planning to retire; Mr. Rainey has a nice relationship with the companies they would like to work with, which is something his replacement may not have yet. The \$97,000 includes the closure of the first lagoon and construction of the road going in to service the other lagoons. Additional funds in the amount of \$20,000 for RMI to do the permitting will be required. \$34,800 worth of road base materials will be provided by existing material in the public works department or purchased with budgeted funds. The first year total is approximately \$152,000; this has to be considered when looking at the project as a whole.

Selectman Rollins said the RMI letter makes it sound as though additional testing may be necessary. Mr. Bianchi said before they can back-fill once the sludge is removed, they will do some testing of the sludge, which isn't going to be as extensive as the initial testing. Mr. Currier said the stockpile of sludge will be tested and before it can be moved and used for other things, it has to be tested once again. Dr. Wilson said he talked to the NNEFS principal who said after the middle to end of April they have little flexibility in scheduling. The sooner they are hired, the easier the scheduling will be for this project.

Selectman Kidder said there is not enough money to close the lagoons. Dr. Wilson said they have proposed a way to get the funding. Selectman Kidder doesn't think it appropriate to ask the taxpayers to approve a bond for certain things and then not use the funds for what was intended. Mr. Bianchi said there were no dollar amounts given for the various projects proposed for the bond and hopefully some money would remain to put towards this project. Mr. Bianchi added that they always end up with extra gravel at the end of the year so perhaps they can use what they have instead of paying for more to be brought in. The price quote they are given is much lower than what Nobis Engineering provided, which was over \$800,000.

Chair Helm came up with the amount of \$152,000 needed for the first closure. For one lagoon, according to Dr. Wilson's numbers, they are short about \$54,000. They have \$20,000 in capital reserves, and \$80,000 is earmarked from the bond. Ms. Johnson feels confident that the general fund budget would be able to come up with additional \$55,000 to close the shortage. They don't have the \$80,000 approved at Town Meeting yet as the bank loan has not yet been secured.

Mr. Bianchi said the principals said they do a lot of work with municipalities and understand budgeting. Chair Helm wonders if it is realistic to do much of this project prior to July 1st. Dr. Wilson believes RMI will work with the Town on this. If they can at least start the process by getting the town on their schedule that would be good. Mr. Lee agreed; he said he didn't see that they would be doing any of the work until mid-July when the area is dry. They can work on getting things all ready prior to their arrival. It all depends on the weather.

Mr. Lee said the Brookside Drive project may come in less than they thought, but he wasn't sure – if it does come in under the \$250,000 estimated, the unused funds could be put towards the sewer lagoon project. Mr. Lee noted that the culvert pipe alone is estimated to cost \$90,000. He said they could use enough gravel they already have to bring the cost of gravel in the lagoon closure estimate from \$34,000 to about \$10,000.

Selectman Kidder reminded her colleagues that they had hoped to find the funds needed for the street lighting updates as presented by the Energy Committee; a grant has been secured to help pay for the project. Selectman Rollins said she thinks it would be helpful to hear from RMI to see what kind of deal they would work out with the town to be able to pay for the work. She believes the Budget Committee needs to weigh in on this issue prior to making any decisions.

Mr. Bianchi said RMI submitting the closure plan to the state will expedite the approval as they (RMI) have a good rapport with the State.

Selectman Rollins wonders what RMI and NNEFS would be willing to accept taking into consideration their limited funds prior to July 1st. Dr. Wilson believes that \$10,000 for each group would be enough to get them going. Mr. Bianchi said these contractors are very willing to work with the Town on this and work within their parameters and time constraints.

Chair Helm said he feels resistance from his colleagues about trying to come up with funds to complete the closure of all three lagoons this year. Selectman Rollins doesn't feel comfortable manipulating funds after things were approved at Town Meeting. She believes they should try to close the first lagoon but wants to get input from the Budget Committee with regards to coming up with the needed funds for various things on their radar.

Mr. Bianchi said at Town Meeting, he presented the bond article to the citizens; he did not give specific numbers for each project and doesn't feel they are bound to the dollar if they have to spend a little more than \$80,000 on the lagoon closure. He feels the Town has some leeway to work within the bond to get the needed work done. The Selectmen understand Mr. Bianchi's point. Mr. Bianchi said historically, the Town has been able to find money to get things done. He has good faith that this could be done again, out of the current budget and not having to dip into the FY2017 budget.

Chair Helm said the next step is to have Ms. Hallquist speak with the two companies to see if they can get started working within their financial and timeline limitations. He senses that his colleagues do not want to postpone projects, such as the salt shed, to use the funds to close the lagoons in their entirety. Mr. Bianchi said the committee is not in favor of eliminating any of the projects that were meant to be in the bond. Chair Helm read from the proposal that was provided to them by the sewer lagoon closure committee that said they could complete the lagoon closure if money from the salt shed and the bridge repair was used. Dr. Wilson said they were originally going to put \$23,000 aside per year for the salt shed. They could use some funds from the bridge and the salt shed to supplement the lagoon closure, and still have additional funds to complete the other projects.

Selectman Kidder said she finds it interesting that Dr. Wilson is being so flexible with funds now and prior to this, he was not. Dr. Wilson said that was then and now he knows much more about these lagoons. Closing them all at once will save the town \$25,000. Chair Helm said the *Municipal Matters* newsletter spelled out a rough estimation of what funds would be used from the bond for which projects. It seems to him to be an aggressive approach trying to get all of this done in one summer. He feels it better to do a good, solid job on the first lagoon. Then do the bridge and salt shed, and the next year they will show the town what has been completed and then ask for the additional funds to complete the lagoon closure.

Selectman Rollins would like to close the first lagoon and submit the proposal through RMI to the State. She would still like to run the numbers by the Budget Committee. Ms. Hallquist was asked to contact the two companies and have some Budget Committee members present at the next Selectmen's meeting to discuss these expenses.

It was determined that more information was needed before the Selectmen could make a decision to move forward and how.

Project List Review

The Board reviewed the recommended list of priorities as prepared by Ms. Hallquist. Selectman Kidder noted the needed addition of the lighting project. Selectman Rollins said that to her, a project being worked on and that is funded should be in a list separate from new projects that are on the horizon but are not yet started or funded. She thinks Whipple Hall is a priority as well as overall facilities and space issues for recreation and dispatch. Chair Helm believes that all the projects should be listed together in order of importance whether they are funded or not. Some of these projects are years in the future but need to be identified.

Selectman Rollins said it has been noted at several CAC meetings that the website needs updating. Selectman Kidder said it has been suggested to have a company study the transfer station location, but funds for this were removed from the budget. Selectman Rollins said the Academy Building updates that are needed are astounding. The life-safety issues at Whipple Hall and the outside/drainage work should also be addressed.

Selectman Rollins said the Planning Board and Energy Committee should be consulted about projects they are hoping to complete, including the lighting project. The GIS mapping update and the salt shed should also be added.

Town Administrator's Report

Ms. Hallquist noted receipt of a letter of resignation from School Board member Carter Bascom, who represents New London. Gena Edmonds has expressed interest in serving on the board in his place. Chair Helm said they should make the appointment at the next meeting on April 13th. This appointment will fill the position until the next election. Ben Cushing is the other New London representative and is in favor of Ms. Edmonds filling the vacancy when Carter leaves.

Ms. Hallquist noted that she, Doug Lyon, and Mark Kaplan toured the 1941 Building on Friday with Linda Nicklos (Town Clerk/Tax Collector). They looked at the cafeteria for a future voting space. She spoke with the superintendent and facilities director about the use of the space. It is estimated that repairs and upgrades to make the cafeteria usable will cost \$70,000; the project schedule has not yet been considered as they are working on the new roofing at this time. Chair Helm wonders if putting temporary flooring down, replacing ceiling tiles, and sending a crew in to clean would be enough to get the space ready to be used for an election; maybe they could contribute \$5,000 to take these measures. Ms. Hallquist couldn't say whether this would be acceptable to the school district, which is also using the space for storage and they'd need to have a place for all of that to be moved to. She also noted that parking for voters would also have to be addressed.

Mr. Lee offered the use of the public works garage for voting. He noted that the garage is being refurbished now; there is plenty of parking and the building is big enough. The Selectmen were interested in the suggestion and Ms. Hallquist said she and Ms. Nicklos would go visit the site to see if it would be an appropriate place. Selectman Rollins suggested Chief Andersen weigh in on this possibility and consider traffic patterns.

Ms. Hallquist said that the Dubois and King contract will hopefully be coming in this week, and will include the survey work at the beach area included at no additional cost. Health rates for 2017 are going up 6.7% which is less than the 9.2% they budgeted for. Ms. Hallquist cautioned that savings could change based on changes in plan types, for example a single plan going to a family plan.

Ms. Hallquist noted that she and Richard Lee met with L&M Construction and Pathways for the start-up meeting for the Elkins project; the project stopped for the winter and is set to begin, with mobilization scheduled for that

day. Mr. Lee confirmed that mobilization did occur as planned, and said the forms for the concrete parapets were built that day. The project should be complete by May 26th.

Selectman Rollins asked where they were with the Recreation Van. Selectman Kidder said members of the Recreation Commission and Scott Blewitt took a ride in one that day. The dealer they are talking with sells vans to schools and camps; they are from Rhode Island. Mr. Blewitt informed the Recreation Commission that two other companies have reached out to him and he has not yet made the decision on which he will go with. The cost was about \$57,000 but is negotiable; a trailer hitch will have to be added. This would be a lease to purchase. Selectman Rollins inquired if the van will be handicapped accessible. Selectman Kidder said it is not wheelchair accessible. It does have two large railings and is wide enough for a walker. There is room for a wheelchair to be stowed if someone with a wheelchair was mobile enough to enter the van without it.

The Board considered the previous request of Moderator Michael Todd asking for a change in voting hours to begin one hour earlier, at 7AM. Ms. Nicklos is also in favor of starting voting at 7AM. The proposal is to have voting available from 7am to 7pm.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to change the hours of polling in New London from 7am to 7pm. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Committee Meetings & Reports

Selectman Kidder said the Planning Board met on March 22nd. They discussed the Colby-Sawyer College Fine Arts Center. Their application was approved with some conditions. Matt Conway came as well and plans to reopen CB Coburn Fine Gifts & Candy where Colby Realty was.

Review of Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the minutes of March 21, 2016 as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

- Next Regular Selectmen's Meeting – Wednesday, April 13th - 6:00 PM
- Recreation Commission – Tuesday, April 5th – 5:00PM – Whipple Town Hall
- Planning Board – Tuesday, April 12th – 6:30PM
- Conservation Commission – Wednesday, April 20th – 8:30 AM

Citizen's Advisory Committee

The CAC will meet quarterly, beginning in May. Dates will be as follows:

May 7, August 13, November 5, February 4

Application for Building Permit

- Clayton & Claire Ketchum, 554 Pleasant Street, New London, TM 061-008-000. Construct 10' x 12' Shed. BP# 16-023. **APPROVED.**
- Mark & Marilyn Wendling, 31 Pingree Road, TM 036-005-000. Add two-story addition with basement & a front porch. BP# 16-024. **APPROVED.**
- Christopher & Pauline Lizzotte, 598 Pleasant Street, New London, TM 048-010-000. Adding 140 s.f. of new deck. **APPROVED.**

Application for Sign Permit

- Temporary Sign Permit (18"x24" poster board on sandwich board sign holder) at Chamber of Commerce Information Booth by Stephanie Baxter of First Baptist Church for Rummage Sale for April 4 to 23, 2016. **APPROVED.**
- Temporary Sign Permit (2' x 3' free standing) at Chamber of Commerce Information Booth for Turkey Dinner at First Free-Will Baptist Church. **APPROVED.**
- Temporary Sign Permit (6' square on wooden A-frame) by Peter Winship for Pleasant Lake Protective Assoc. at Town of New London Pleasant Lake Boat Ramp. **APPROVED.**
- Temporary Sign Permit (18" x 36" A-frame) at Chamber of Commerce Information Booth for Kearsarge Chorale Concert on Sunday, April 24, 2016. **APPROVED**

Requests to Use Town Property

- Whipple Town Hall by Terri Bingham of First Baptist Church on behalf of Bike and Build for June 18 - 19, 2016 and waiver of user fee.

Other Items to be Signed

- Town of New London Payroll Authorization Voucher Date 4/4/16 by Wendy Johnson

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London