



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

May 18, 2020

6:00 PM

Meeting Conducted via Zoom

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically. The public has access to contemporaneously listen and participate in this meeting through the video conferencing platform Zoom.us

PARTICIPATING:

Janet Kidder, Chairman
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
John Cannon, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PARTICIPATING:

Emily Cobb, New London Police Chief
Rob Prohl, Budget Committee Chair
Lindsay Harkins, Recreation Commission
Michael Todd, Town Moderator
Will Kidder, Town Tax Collector

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

Acceptance of up to \$99,379 of CARES Act Assistance

Ms. Hallquist explained that the state has made funds available to municipalities for assistance in COVID-19 related expenses. She recommended that the Board vote to accept the funds, pursuant to RSA 21-P:43; the Finance Officer will collect the eligible expenses for reimbursement; the Town Administrator can apply for reimbursement of the eligible expenses behalf of the Town.

Selectman Rollins inquired as to how the Town will apply for the funds. Town Administrator Ms. Hallquist responded that if the Selectmen approve acceptance of the funds, the grant application will be submitted to the state. The funds can be applied to non-FEMA reimbursable items that were purchased to address the COVID-19 pandemic. She explained that expenses that may be reimbursed include interest on tax anticipated notes, should the town have to borrow, increased welfare expenses, costs related to employees working from home. It was noted that o If we can get things from FEMA we have to go there first. Some items we can get reimbursed for include interest on tax anticipated notes should we borrow money, increased welfare expenses due to the Corona virus and the employer related expense from the First Responder Stipend program. Ms. Hallquist noted that currently the 25% town match for FEMA reimbursement is not reimbursable through the State CARES Act assistance, but that may change.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to accept up to \$99,379 of CARES Act assistance, pursuant to RSA 21-P:43 from the state of New Hampshire for a reimbursement of the town's expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Roll call vote: Nancy Rollins: Yes, John Cannon: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Participation in the First Responder stipend program

Ms. Hallquist explained that the program is voluntary on the part of the town; the state will give the town the funds to pay eligible first responders a weekly stipend of \$300 per week for full-time and \$150 for part-time, and lesser amounts for "call personnel". The total amount to be paid for New London first responders is estimated to be \$45,000. The town is required to pay the employment taxes (FICA & Medicare) and the increased overtime rates. The start date for this fund is May 4 - June 30, 2020. The employer expenses can be reimbursed from the CARES Act funds discussed previously.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to participate in the First Responder Stipend Program and to accept up to \$45,000 in funds from the State of New Hampshire for this purpose. Roll call vote: Nancy Rollins: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes, John Cannon: Recused from the vote. THE MOTION CARRIES.

Warrant for collection of 1st & 2nd issue tax bills: \$9,432,823.16

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to issue collection of the 1st and 2nd tax bills of \$9,432,823.16. Roll call vote: Nancy Rollins: Yes, John Cannon: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

COVID-19 Update: Protective measures in New London during pandemic

Wearing masks

Ms. Hallquist reported that in the past week or so, she has been approached by citizens and businesses that would like direction from the Selectmen with regards to protective measures in effect in New London. One issue is masks and there is concern that people are not wearing masks. Ms. Hallquist is asking the Selectmen if they would like to publicly support the wearing of masks in New London; it is not something they can mandate, but people look to the Selectmen for support during this crisis. There is also concern about people coming in from other parts of the country. This is difficult to enforce but the Selectmen may want to make a statement about this. Selectman Cannon feels this is a good idea and also thinks it should be a requirement of town employees to wear masks while working inside. Selectman Rollins also agrees that they should strongly recommend that people use masks but noted that masks are not required by employees in their offices or in vehicles when they are alone, or citizens walking down the street. She stated they should be following the CDC and the state's guidelines. She would also encourage businesses to have a sign on their front entrance asking people to wear a mask when they come in. They also should be social distancing. Chair Kidder asked that Ms. Hallquist write something up for the next *Municipal Matters* and also include this information on the Town's website.

Police Chief Emily Cobb commented that she is hopeful that the Police Department can set the tone for people coming into town and educate them. They will stress voluntary compliance. The Police Department has received training on safely altering the way they stop cars. They can do a different side of the car approach and will no longer physically take the license and registration in hand. Chief Cobb has reviewed the Governor's stay at home order and it states that people "should" wear a cloth face covering

but it is not a mandate. There is a provision that retail store shall assign dedicated staff to monitor social distancing and compliance with protective action.

Lindsay Harkins feels that more direction from our town Selectmen would be really helpful. She understands it can't be enforced by the Selectmen's viewpoints and opinions go a long way. Chair Kidder stated that more guidance is needed from the Federal Government and state government and until we have that, we will continue to practice social distancing and wear masks. It is an enforcement issue so there isn't much else to do at this point.

Rob Prohl asked if we have any responsibility for gatherings on town property if there is not any signage there noting that he sees people on the dam. Chief Cobb responded that people should not be on the dam wall at all so they would move them along if that was the case. Mr. Prohl suggested posting signage to remind people of social distancing. Chair Kidder responded that she will take a ride around town with Bob Harrington and Kim Hallquist to look at the beaches and review the signage that we do have. We may need to update it for the current situation.

Scheduling of FY2020 audit with Plodzik & Sanderson

Ms. Hallquist stated that for the scheduling of FY2020 audit is needed and she recommended engaging Plodzik & Sanderson to perform the audit.

IT WAS MOVED (John Cannon) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to select Plodzik & Sanderson as the auditors for the FY2020 audit. Roll call vote: Nancy Rollins: Yes, John Cannon: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Sewer Lagoon Capital Reserve funds transfer to general fund

IT WAS MOVED (John Cannon) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve moving the Sewer Lagoon Capital Reserve Funds to reimburse the general fund for expenses paid in the amount of \$8,129.04 to close the lagoons.

Roll call vote: Nancy Rollins: Yes, John Cannon: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Abatement for 84 Main Street – tax exempt property billed in error

Ms. Hallquist stated this is property owned by the Barn Playhouse and it should have been in the computer as a tax-exempt property and it was not. To correct the error, an abatement is in order and she recommended the Selectmen grant it.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to approve the abatement of taxes for 84 Main Street in the amount of \$217,800 due to a billing error.

Roll call: Nancy Rollins: Yes, John Cannon: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Town Administrators Report

Ms. Hallquist provided the following report:

- On Friday, the Governor renewed the state of emergency. This is the third renewal and this is for another 21 days.
- Camp Coniston and New London Hospital days have canceled their 2020 summer events.

- On Friday, May 29, 2020, Colby-Sawyer College, New London Hospital, the school district and the town will participate together in a public webinar called "Community Conversations" to discuss each organization's plans and challenges during COVID-19. Ms. Hallquist will put this information in *Municipal Matters* and will also post it on the town website. It will be a great opportunity for citizens to hear from all four of these entities about what is happening.
- The Council on Aging (COA) is tentatively scheduled to reopen on June 15, 2020. They have plenty of protections and procedures in place that are posted to their website. They will be observing all of the Governor's and CDC guidelines for social distancing, hand washing and wearing masks.
- The Selectmen need to select the voting site for the September 8, 2020 primary by June 1, 2020 and the location needs to be posted by then. Mr. Todd, Moderator, would like to address the Board on the matter.

Michael Todd, Moderator, reported that they have studied the requirements of minimizing the effects of transmission of COVID-19 and looked at the prior venue, Whipple Hall that has been used in the past with great success. The conclusion is that Whipple Hall doesn't offer enough square footage for the required number of voting booths to maintain the 6-foot distance requirement for the voters. It also doesn't allow for the distance required for the ballot clerks checking in the voters or to maintain the requisite distance required for the supervisors of the checklist who may be called upon to register new voters on that day. In order to minimize the potential transmission of the virus, it is preferable to have a voting place where persons enter and leave the facility by different means. They looked at other venues and have tentatively decided the best option is the large Town Highway garage. This is going to require the town crew to empty the garage of all vehicles, thoroughly clean and disinfect it and set up all the tables. A meeting will be scheduled before the next Board of Selectmen's meeting to finalize the voting location.

Selectman Cannon suggested contacting Bob Harrington about this as it will have a big impact on their operations and staff. Mr. Todd stated he had already given a heads up to Mr. Harrington a few weeks ago so he should be aware of it.

Committee Meetings & Reports

Planning Board

Chair Kidder reported that a Planning Board meeting was held on May 12, 2020. Ausbon Sargent is purchasing 144 acres from the Dorr family. A smaller lot of 25 acres will be retained by the Dorr's.

There will be a change to the clothing drop off box at the Transfer station. The Planning Board requested more details about what the drop off box was going to look like and also where the clothing is going to go.

Recreation Commission

Chair Kidder also reported that there was a Recreation Commission meeting this morning. There will not be a Strawberry Festival this year, no sailing lessons and the adventure camp is canceled. A decision is still being considered with regards to the regular summer camps. The Recreation Commission recommends that the town beaches be open but they will not have lifeguards there nor will the bathrooms be open. On June 6, 2020 they will meet again and may consider providing lifeguards. It will depend on the Governor's recommendations.

Selectman Rollins asked for clarification relative to the town beaches. Are they open or closed? Chair Kidder responded that they are currently open but there won't be lifeguards and people will use the beaches at their own risk. Also, the bathrooms will be closed. Selectman Rollins noted that other towns are staging the opening of beaches and she suggested the town should take a stance. Enforcement will be

an issue but she has concerns about the bathrooms being closed. She also thinks the picnic tables should be removed or stacked so they cannot be used. Selectman Rollins stressed that the expectation should be that the people should not go to the beach to hang out. Parking should also be limited. Selectman Rollins wants clear signage as to what the message is to the public.

Lindsay Harkins agrees that there should be a publicly stated position from the town about the beaches. Any responsibility will get traced back to the Recreation Department and without a set of guidelines to help mandate and regulate it there will be issues. She would rather be proactive than reactive. Chair Kidder responded that the whole pandemic has been reactive, noting that the town has not had clear guidance from the government on how any of this should be handled. Recreation Director Scott Blewitt has 8 lifeguards ready to go when they get the alert from the state that it is safe to do so. They can act quickly to get the beaches staffed when it is time.

Michael Todd reported that there was a brief meeting of the Bandstand Committee earlier in the day. The general consensus among the committee members was that the concerts could provide an uplifting experience for people that have been confined to their homes for a long period of time. They are looking at options that would allow these concerts that have been scheduled to continue. There are issues however, that include the band members not being able to rehearse due to restrictions of social distancing, and disinfecting the bandstand, chairs etc. Public gatherings are also currently limited to ten people. The committee is optimistic that there could be a summer concert series, but it is predicated on government and local recommendations. Chair Kidder stated it would be great to have the concerts, but it would be difficult to have the six foot spacing on the bandstand for the musicians.

Board of Firewards

Selectman Rollins reported that the Board of Firewards met last week. Calls are up and there is a lot of un-permitted burning going on. She suggested putting a statement in *Municipal Matters* reminding people about obtaining the proper permits.

Meeting Minutes – May 4, 2020

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to approve the minutes of May 4th meeting. Roll call: Nancy Rollins: Yes, John Cannon: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED.

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

- Next regular Selectmen's meeting – Monday, June 1ST – 6:00 PM
- Conservation Commission – Wednesday, May 20th – 9:00 AM via Zoom
- **All Town Offices Closed – Memorial Day – Monday, May 25th**
- Planning Board - Tuesday, May 26th – 6:30 PM via Zoom

Items to be signed

- Accounts Payable Voucher
- Engagement Letter with Auditors Plodzick & Sanderson
- Tax Abatements
- Sewer Connection Requests
- Notice of Intent to Cut – 528 County Road TM 082-033-0-0-0
- Veterans' Credit Applications
- Applications To Use Town Property
 - ✓ Whipple Town Hall – On Saturdays, June 26, July 3, 10, 17, August 7, 14, 21 from 4:30 pm to 8:30 pm for a summer concerts by the New London Bandstand Committee.

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Building Permits

- Lake Sunapee Country Club, 344 Andover Road, TM 098-026-0-0-0. After the fact - interior renovations. BP 20-030 approved 5/8/20.
- Michael & Jennifer Murphy, 654 Wilmot Center Road, TM 040-003-0-0-0. Convert barn loft to living area. BP 20-031 approved 5/8/20.
- Paola Marin & Bregt Eerlingen, 246 King Hill Road, TM 122-026-0-0-0. Build 2 story 13'x14' two story addition. BP 20-036 approved 5/8/20.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:23PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson
Recording Secretary
Town of New London