



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee Meeting Minutes September 14, 2015

BOARD OF SELECTMEN PRESENT: Nancy Rollins (Chair), Peter Bianchi, Janet Kidder
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Rob Prohl (Chair), Joe Cardillo (Vice-Chair),
Suzanne Jesseman, Tyler Beck, Phyllis Piotrow, Bruce Hudson, Colin Campbell. **MEMBERS
ABSENT:** John Wilson, Chris Lorio
STAFF PRESENT:
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:
Linda Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector
Ed Andersen, Police Chief
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief

Chair Rollins called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. The Meeting was held at Whipple Town Hall.

Overview of Ongoing/Upcoming Projects within the Town

Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator, said the Academy Building project is on schedule. The bandstand and cupola on Whipple Hall will be repaired as well, with all projects to be completed in November, weather permitting. The Elkins project will continue until winter shutdown and they will finish up in the spring. The Elkins beach bath house will become handicap accessible and some of this work will begin in the fall and be finished up in the spring. The draft report from Nobis Engineering for the sewer lagoons came in and the final report, with cost estimates, will be available for consideration in the upcoming budget. The report will help estimate the amount of money needed to close out the lagoons. Richard Lee (Public Works Director) thinks if they do it within a year or two from the report, the engineering work should remain viable. The culverts at Brookside drive need to be replaced and that engineering work is in progress. The State has been making towns replace the culverts with bridges as they are better for the environment in that there is no pipe in the water, as culverts are. If New London is somehow allowed to replace the culverts in kind, the cost will be less than if they have to put in bridges.

Mr. Prohl inquired if the date for delivery of the CIP was known. Ms. Hallquist noted that she was not sure of the date, but she understands that the Planning Board subcommittee that has been commissioned to study space issues in town will submit their report soon, and the Planning Board will consider that information to complete the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Ms. Hallquist added that the Town replied to the State DES letter asking for an update on the town's plans to address the deficiency at the Pleasant Lake Dam. She noted that the next step is to hire an engineer to prepare a plan to come into compliance with the letter of deficiency. Appropriation for engineering fees will have to be put on the warrant.

Mr. Prohl asked Chief Andersen if he had heard back on the grant for the repeater to be placed at Whipple Hall. Chief Andersen said he hasn't heard back yet but should in October.

It was noted that Chief Andersen, Chief Lyon, and Selectman Kidder have gone to speak with the Selectmen and emergency services representatives from Wilmot about dispatching. They plan to go to Sutton next on September 28th. The Town of Newbury will be next although that meeting is not yet scheduled.

Report on 2016 Expenditures – Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

Ms. Johnson noted that the Town is 10 weeks into the new fiscal year. Things are going along normally. They have secured a \$350,000 loan from Lake Sunapee Bank at 1.95%. They signed the paperwork last week and the money is in the bank.

Ms. Johnson noted that she expects that \$423,000 to be added to the unassigned fund balance; this is approximately the same amount added from FY2014. She said considering this balance, if the selectmen use \$400,000 of the unassigned fund balance, she would estimate the tax rate to be about \$4.08. Mr. Prohl asked about the tax rate for the following year, if the budget is increased by 3%. Ms. Johnson estimated it would be about \$.30 more.

Selectman Bianchi reminded everyone that during last year's budget season, several capital reserves were closed which impacted the revenues. This will need to be considered when calculating the revenues for FY2017 as those revenues were a one-time only addition to revenues.

Ms. Piotrow asked about the personnel study that the Selectmen had talked about last year. Chair Rollins said the committee studying personnel has met once and will meet again in October. They may not have a recommendation for the upcoming budget. They are looking at compensation with regards to equity and pay grades.

Chair Rollins said the budget concerns she sees are the ongoing projects outside of Whipple (lagoons, Pleasant Lake Dam, etc.). Selectman Bianchi agreed and added there are a lot of unknowns when working with the State. If the State says things have to be done right away, it could impact the Town greatly. The good news is that New London's percentage of flow to the wastewater treatment plant is below 60% although they have historically been paying for 65%. They have the next 19 years to pay off the sewer bond.

Chair Rollins asked Ms. Johnson how the vote in Concord on Wednesday would impact the town with regards to revenues. Ms. Johnson said that the Highway Block Grant and Rooms and Meals taxes are a part of the vote. They are accounting for \$220,000 in Rooms and Meals taxes and \$134,000 for the Block Grant. Until they hear otherwise, they will consider that the funds will arrive as planned.

It was asked about the 1941 Building and the result of the meeting the Town had with the School District about the acquisition of the building and site. Ms. Hallquist said the Selectmen met with the ad hoc committee of the School Board to discuss the issue. The members of the ad hoc committee were disappointed that the Town didn't have a plan in place for use of the building. The ad hoc committee plans to recommend taking the building down. Ms. Hallquist noted that there was discussion of the Town collaborating with the school district to upgrade the cafeteria and classrooms and then the space would be available for use by the Town. The ad hoc committee reported that keeping the land as part of the district, even if the 1941 building is removed, remains important to the School Board.

Selectman Bianchi said the Planning Board encouraged the Selectmen to try and obtain the building. Now they need to wait and see what the district will do. Chair Rollins said the district wants to work with the Town. Any space remaining after the 1941 building is taken down could be used by the Town. They talked about the Town's interest in the property but the district is not interested in giving the building or any of the land back to the Town.

Mr. Prohl asked if there had been any thought to moving the Recreation Department into the space at the SAU or somewhere at Colby-Sawyer College. He understood dispatch may need more space, which would optimally be the space currently being used by Recreation. Chair Rollins said the committee researching space issues will need to weigh in on this. This is part of a broader discussion. With regards to having Recreation housed at the college, she feels this would be a conflict of interest.

Mr. Hudson asked if the study of the K-9 Unit would impact the budget at all. Chair Rollins said the report from the committee studying the feasibility of a K-9 Unit within New London PD was due in January. They won't know any details until then, but the Selectmen will make a recommendation after the report has been submitted.

Mr. Prohl asked if there were any new positions being proposed or any additional hours for current positions. Selectman Bianchi said they recently replaced the part-time Selectmen's Office Assistant (Kristy Heath) with two part-time employees, who will work a combined total of 50 hours per week. Mr. Cardillo asked if there would be a Code Enforcement Officer position proposed this year. Ms. Hallquist noted that she intends to make a recommendation for a part-time code enforcement person.

Joint Budget Goals/Priorities

Mr. Prohl said he understands it is hard to estimate budget limits at this point when the Selectmen haven't seen the budgets from the Department Heads. Chair Rollins said it is not her intent to put undue burden on taxpayers. Some containment of operating costs should be considered. She thinks they need to be prudent.

Chair Rollins noted that she liked having the Selectmen meet with the Budget Committee at the end of the budgeting process last year and she felt they should do this again.

Selectman Bianchi noted that New London was up almost 1% in the grand list.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London