



TOWN OF  
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 13, 2013**

**PRESENT:**

Tina Helm, Chair  
Peter Bianchi, Selectman  
Janet Kidder, Selectman  
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator  
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Peter Bragdon, Executive Director, HealthTrust, Inc.  
Richard Lee, Public Works Director  
Jason Lyon, Fire Chief  
Ed Andersen, Interim Police Chief  
Dave Zuger, Corporal  
Ben Cushing, Budget Committee Member

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 8:00am and called for a moment of silence to recognize the passing of Ray Burton, Executive Council member for District One. Councilor Burton died on November 12.

**Continuation of Public Hearing: Kearsarge Telephone Company (a.k.a. TDS) Franchise Agreement.**

Tom Murray, Manager State Government Affairs, met with the Board to present the final franchise agreement request. Ms. Hallquist noted that all changes have been reviewed, and approved, by town counsel. The Board noted that the law requires that any additional franchise agreements not be "more favorable" than the existing Comcast agreement. That requirement has been met in the agreement as proposed. Mr. Murray noted that a lot of the fiber is already in place and they are almost ready to launch the service. He observed that New London is the first community with competitive service.

**IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the franchise agreement, as reviewed and approved by town counsel, with Kearsarge Telephone Company (a.k.a. TDS). THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Peter Bragdon- HealthTrust, Inc.**

Mr. Bragdon met with the Board to introduce himself as the new executive director of HealthTrust, Inc. (formerly part of Local Government Center (LGC), but now an independent nonprofit organization). Mr. Bragdon explained that as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA), Property Liability Trust (PLT) and HealthTrust, Inc. are independent organizations, and LGC as it was known no longer exists. He explained that the goal for HealthTrust is to provide competitive insurance tailored to schools and towns. He noted that they are in full compliance with the order of the Bureau of Securities but are appealing the requirement to spend 3.5 million to purchase re-insurance, as they feel it is an unnecessary expense to pass on to towns. He noted that the case will be heard the next day at the Supreme Court but assured the Board that no matter the outcome of the case, the organization won't be

put out of business, however, a loss will mean more expense for taxpayers. Mr. Bragdon noted that he is aware that the other two organizations (NHMA and PLT) are in compliance with all orders as well.

Selectman Bianchi noted that there is another story in the newspaper today, and wondered how much money is being spent on all of the lawsuits. Mr. Bragdon acknowledged that a lot of money has been spent on the various court cases but noted that for much of the expense, insurance policies have paid the costs to litigate. He admitted that the organization did not do the best job of managing the issues that came up.

Selectman Kidder asked if his position as a NH State Senator will require him to recuse himself on votes that come to the Senate regarding insurance matters. Mr. Bragdon noted that he will recuse himself only on votes that relate to RSA 5-B Pooled Risk Programs, but not all insurance matters. He intends to vote on issues like Medicaid expansion, workers comp and other insurance related issues, and noted that he will make it known that he works for an insurance organization. Selectman Kidder noted that when he was appointed to LGC it appeared that it was an attempt to use his position as Senate President to deal with outstanding issues against LGC. Mr. Bragdon noted that he understands the public perception of his appointment and he has been up front about it. He assured the Board that he met with Secretary of State Bill Gardiner and has open communications with that office. Selectman Bianchi noted that they are looking forward to having all of the court cases behind them. Mr. Bragdon agreed.

The Board thanked Mr. Bragdon for attending their meeting and bringing them up-to-date on issues regarding HealthTrust, Inc. and the status of the former LGC.

#### **Richard Lee – Director, Public Works Department**

##### *Elkins Project*

Mr. Lee noted that the estimate of \$180,000 to reconstruct the roads that are part of the Elkins project will be handled within his budget. He was considering using some of his FY2014 money into FY2015 to cover some of the costs. He noted that he just wanted to have the conversation with the Board so they can consider it should it become necessary. Selectman Bianchi inquired when the paving would be done. Mr. Lee responded that it would likely be done in the fall as the base coat is needed to set the curbs. The final coat could be done the following spring. Selectman Kidder asked how long the paving would take. Mr. Lee noted that if a big company is used, it will take only a couple of months. Selectman Kidder inquired about the impact of the work on Elkins Beach. Mr. Lee noted that there is plenty in the budget for traffic control, although there would be some inconvenience to those in the area. Mr. Lee said if they closed the road off while making repairs, they could save about \$8,000 in police staffing. It is possible to get around that area with the road closed. They might start as soon as the first of June and be done by the beginning of July. It will be an inconvenience for a few people but he felt it was doable.

##### *Sherman Street*

Mr. Lee said that some of the people who live on Sherman Street are concerned that some trucking companies using GPS are brought onto their street. The tractor trailer trucks are then not able to make the turn onto Wilmot Center Road very well. There have been some near-misses with vehicles trying to avoid the trucks. Some residents want to have a permanent sign put up that says "No Thru Trucking." The Selectmen thought this was a good idea and Selectman Kidder thought it should be done immediately.

Ms. Hallquist wondered if there was a way to contact the GPS companies about avoiding Sherman Street. Mr. Cushing offered that there is a couple in town who work for TomTom in the mapping department and perhaps they could be approached about this change.

**IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the installation of “No Thru Trucking” signs on Sherman Street pending an investigation to find whether a public hearing is needed or not. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

*Public Hearing for Low Sand Roads – December 2*

Mr. Lee said they need to have a public hearing set to put signs up for the “Low Sand area” signs. Ms. Hallquist suggested the hearing could be December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The policy should be ready by November 25<sup>th</sup> for public inspection prior to the meeting.

*Parkside Road and Sidewalk*

Mr. Lee asked if the Selectmen had any ideas for Parkside Road, which he felt was in the worst shape of any road in the central part of town. He thought it should be ground up and re-paved. He wondered if they should leave the sidewalk or take it out. They put the sidewalk in when the Middle School was in town and kids were going to the Outing Club regularly. The sidewalk is narrow and they can’t maintain it in the winter. Mr. Lee said when the sidewalk went in, they had to take about 18” from the road and property owners were not happy. He noted that the water main is down the center of the road and if they get within 2’ of it, it is easy to poke a hole in it. The water precinct will make the Town replace the main if they damage it. Selectman Bianchi said from a public standpoint, people always want more sidewalks and people may not be in favor of taking it away. Mr. Lee thought they should take the sidewalk out and increase the width of the pavement. They could then paint lines to designate a walking path. This could be plowed with their regular truck.

Chair Helm wondered if it would be helpful and “neighborhood-friendly” to call for a meeting of the neighbors to help decide what to do. Mr. Lee said this would be a good idea. Ms. Johnson, who lives in the neighborhood, opined that the sidewalk is too narrow and people don’t use it; they walk in the street. The street is terrible because it is very narrow. There is an enormous amount of foot traffic on the road. Lyon Brook residents are walking there all the time with their dogs. She thought the existing sidewalk should be torn out and replaced all the way to County Road. Mr. Lee agreed and said at some point in the future they could build a whole new sidewalk. He said in some places they would need to get easements from property owners to put a larger sidewalk in.

Police Chief Andersen said cars have been clocked on that road going between 45 and 50 miles per hour. If the sidewalk was better it would encourage pedestrians to use it instead of the road. He worried that speeding on the road would continue and increase if the road was widened. Chair Helm thought they should get the neighborhood on board first to see what the issues were.

Mr. Lee said everyone on Parkside would need to be on board with a sidewalk project because easements would be needed all the way down the road. Selectman Bianchi offered that they may need to let the capital reserve for sidewalks build up a bit before they could do this work. Perhaps this should be brought up to the CIP committee as a long-term project. Mr. Lee didn’t think this would go into next year’s CIP but perhaps the following year.

Chief Lyon wasn’t sure if the hospital expansion and elderly housing was being discussed again as there had been plans for an entrance off from Parkside. This might be a time to work with the hospital on the sidewalk especially if they are planning to add more pedestrian traffic to the area. Chair Helm said the discussion for this expansion and elderly housing has revived at the hospital so there may be more discussion in the future. Chief Lyon felt it would be helpful to know if more people would be using the road as this may change the Town’s idea to take out the sidewalk and not replace it with something new.

*Transfer Station – First Sunday Open*

Mr. Lee said on Sunday, which was the first Sunday the Transfer Station was open, they had 74 cars go through. The Selectmen thanked Mr. Lee for working with the Town to make Sunday hours possible.

*Seamans Road Pedestrians*

Ms. Hallquist said some emails have come in to her about the safety of pedestrians on Seamans Road near Cottage Lane. The light at the corner is dim and she wondered if they should contact PSNH about putting a brighter light there. Mr. Lee felt all the lights were dim since changing over to the new energy-saving bulbs. Chair Helm said pedestrian traffic in that area has been a concern for a while. It was noted that the students have been good about using the cross-walk for the most part. Ms. Hallquist said she would contact PSNH to find out more details. Mr. Lee said he has two permanent crosswalk signs to put up in that area.

*Gazebo Roofing Concerns*

Mr. Cushing said some townspeople have contacted him about the \$21,000 the Town has approved spending to re-roof the gazebo. As a budget committee member, he was concerned that this was a lot of money to be spent on this project. They are sometimes trying to cut even \$50 from budgets and are trying to tighten belts. He wasn't downplaying the need to fix the roof, but was concerned that this was a lot of money.

Selectman Bianchi said that \$21,000 was the lowest bid out of five. Mr. Cushing wondered if this could have been put off another year. Selectman Bianchi said they were told it was in terrible condition with a lot of rot. Chair Helm said this has been on their agenda for a number of years. The money has been set aside in Capital Reserves for this repair and it had been put off for a while. Selectman Bianchi said a lot of people are concerned about deferred maintenance on the Town's buildings of which there is a lot. They've been trying to get a plan together for preventative maintenance.

Ms. Kidder said the gazebo is used a lot for functions and they have to make sure it is safe. It is in the middle of town and everyone sees it. She offered that Mr. Cushing may feel that the purpose of the Budget Committee was to cut things but it may also be that his purpose is to look at the budget and determine if it is fair and reasonable. They may not need to cut anything and sometimes may need to add things. Recently the Budget Committee has had the attitude that the budget has to be cut. Over the last few years the budget hasn't seen an influx of spending. He should tell people that the roof had to be redone because it was a safety issue, it had been put off for a while, and the money was set aside for it.

*Cruiser Update*

Chief Andersen said the new cruiser was damaged in transport and no one is taking responsibility for it. The car is currently at Grappone and is getting repainted and striped. It won't have a light bar on top as they are using a low-profile look with a light bar inside.

New Business

Chair Helm said a request came in from James Snyder to be able to hunt in the Town's sand pit and on Town property. The pit is currently posted against shooting. Ms. Hallquist said Mr. Snyder says that he is a veteran and is well-versed in firearms. He called the Town to see if it was a possibility that he could be allowed to hunt there. It was noted that the pit Mr. Snyder was referring to was Shepherd Pit and the Town puts their glass there. The police also shoot there occasionally. Selectman Bianchi said after the issues they had with the neighbors in this area, it would not be wise to open that area up to hunting. Chief Andersen said he would prefer to see no shooting in that area; multiple people use the sand pits and there are Public Works employees going in and out of there. The selectmen decided that hunting in that area would not be allowed.

Receipt of Letter from Recreation Commission/Recreation Director, Scott Blewitt

Ms. Kidder said the Recreation Commission feels it would be valuable to have Mr. Blewitt attend the meetings of the 1941 Building Committee and that they were in favor of his eventual move into the 1941 building. The Selectmen had no problem with Mr. Blewitt attending the meetings. Selectman Bianchi felt that Mr. Blewitt should not be speaking for the Town at these meetings, but only on behalf of himself. Chair Helm felt Mr. Blewitt would make a contribution to the committee but they would need to tell him that he is not representing the Town at this point, but the possibilities the Recreation Department could act upon should the building be acquired by the Town. Selectman Kidder said if the Town decides to use the building as a Community Center, they will be supportive of moving him to the building and using it for recreation purposes. Selectman Bianchi felt it was premature at this point to talk about what the Recreation Director would add to the project. Selectman Kidder said he will help make the plans with the committee on how the building could be used as a community center. Chair Helm thought Mr. Blewitt would open some of the doors on possibilities of what could be done in the building. She wondered if they should take a vote to have it on record the conditions of them having him sit on the committee. Selectman Kidder didn't think this was necessary. Selectman Bianchi was indifferent. Mr. Blewitt would be informed of their decision and he would keep them posted.

*Receipt of Letters*

Chair Helm acknowledged receipt of a letter from Bob Brown regarding a letter to Sonia and Peter Gare of Burpee Hill.

Dale Milne from LSPA sent a letter to thank the Town for their support of their weed-watching program.

Town Administrator's Report

Ms. Hallquist said that Ms. St. John would be dropping off the engineering study for the Elkins project to William Rose at the State that day.

Ms. Hallquist said the Town has received health insurance quotes from three companies. She added that the employee committee is working on their presentation they plan to give to the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Hallquist noted that the Police Department is conducting "Lunch with the Law" sessions at the college and asked if they would like to discuss the program. Corporal Zuger said he thought there was a disconnect between the Police Department and the college. In an attempt to reach out to the college and meet with the students they wanted to have an opportunity to have a discussion with them. They met for lunch at the college the last Wednesday and this past Tuesday. In this forum they were able to have some good conversations with students. This approach seems to be well received at all levels of the college and the administration seems to be on board with it.

Selectman Kidder wondered if they could relay citizen concerns to the students at this forum. She noted that it should be conveyed to the students that Seamans Road is not part of campus and it is hard for people to see them when they wear dark-colored clothing and walk in the middle of the road. Zuger said that issues with and surrounding Cottage Lane was one of the reasons he wanted to have this forum. He hoped they would eventually be invited to house meetings and form a good relationship with the students and the College. Chief Andersen said they put an officer on foot patrol on the area of Cottage Lane as that may deter some of the issues they've been dealing with in that area. They plan to meet with campus safety during the luncheons at some point to help get the information out to the students. Peter Berthiaume is working with them to bring awareness to the students about the luncheons.

Chief Andersen explained that there have been complaints of noise at Cottage Lane. There have been complaints because of parties being held at the houses and large amounts of traffic in the area. He said it is similar to having a fraternity house on campus. Chief Andersen said they have had a few arrests due to these issues. Chief Lyon said the buildings, due to the way they are built and sprinkled, are safer than other off-campus buildings that are older and not as well-built.

Ms. Hallquist said she would be meeting that week with the Budget subcommittee and Heather Wood in dispatch. The 2014 rate letters have gone out to the towns New London Dispatch services and a few towns have asked for more information. Both she and Ms. Wood are willing to go to any town to explain why the increases are being requested and they are open to suggestions on how money could be saved.

Ms. Hallquist said she will meet with Beltronics about equipment needs in dispatch going forward. She noted that she would be meeting with Competitive Computers the following day regarding the Town Office's computer equipment. They are finding Systems Plus to be expensive and are hoping for a better rate with Competitive Computers.

#### Committee Meeting/Report

Selectman Bianchi said the Planning Board held their meeting the previous night. There were a couple shoreline permits, Tom Mills of the Flying Goose Pub asked permission to move a dumpster without a Site Plan Review, which was granted, and the Marshall's Garage issue was discussed with each side's respective lawyers. The discussion was continued to the next meeting. Selectman Bianchi felt the Planning Board had to enforce site plan regulations for everyone. Bart Mayer would be contacted again about this issue. There were some tree cutting permits as well. Selectman Bianchi said they need to determine what they would do in town if someone inadvertently cut too much within the shoreline buffer. The State handles it with mitigation.

Selectman Kidder said the Recreation Commission met the previous week. She said that they met with Bill Green and Pat Blanchard from the CIP subcommittee the morning of the meeting. They will ask for the same budget as they did this year. It was felt by the subcommittee that this requested budget was fair and Selectman Kidder asked that they convey that sentiment to the rest of the Budget Committee members. There is \$34,000 left in the revolving fund. Some additional money will possibly be requested as they need some dock replacement. Scott Blewitt (Recreation Director) would be checking with Mr. Lee about replacing the signage at both beaches. He also planned to ask Bill Granger (Facilities Manager) to check the Elkins bath house to see if it is handicapped accessible. It was reported that there were 14 racers in "The Great Pumpkin Race" and there were about 75 people watching the event from the road. The Haunted Woods was also successful despite the bad weather. Businesses were happy with the number of people walking up and down Main Street. Winter carnival is currently being planned for the end of January. The ice skating rink is slated to be ready for skating in mid-December. Mr. Blewitt plans to talk to Mr. Lee about making a sledding hill near the rink.

#### Upcoming Meetings

November 19, 2013 @ 6:00pm – Board of Selectmen

November 21, 2013 – Joint Sewer Meeting

November 26, 2013 @ 8:00am – Board of Selectmen \*this is a change from the original schedule

November 26, 2013 @ 7:00pm – Planning Board (Selectmen will attend to see College's Master Plan presentation)

December 4, 2013 @ 7:00pm – Budget Committee

#### Other Business

*Court Case*

Chair Helm asked about the Howard Family Trust tax abatement issue. Ms. Hallquist said the case was won by the Town at the Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) and the property owners have now appealed to the Supreme Court. The Town is awaiting notification of whether the case will be heard by the Court.

*Abatement Request*

Ms. Hallquist noted receipt of a letter from Deborah Quinlan, of Century Management Corp, who claimed that their sewer bill had not arrived and she didn't know about it. She has always paid her bill and asked if the interest could be reversed and she would pay as soon as she received the adjusted bill. Ms. Hallquist said they generally do not abate for these requests. Anyone who owns property should know that these kinds of bills come due regularly. Selectman Bianchi recused himself as he is paid by the organization Ms. Quinlan works for.

Chair Helm didn't think they could approve the request for abatement.

**IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to deny the request for abatement for Deborah Quinlan. THE MOTION PASSED. Peter Bianchi abstained from the vote.**

Review of Minutes

**IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of November 4, 2013, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to go into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(c). Roll call vote: Bianchi (yes); Kidder (yes); Helm (yes) THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Application for sign permit:

- The Fells, sign at Information booth – 12/1-12/8/2013 – approved
- Lake Sunapee VNA – holiday fair – 1 sign at info booth 1 sign at church – approved
- Kearsarge Chorale – concert – 1 sign at info booth – 1 sign at church - approved

Application to use Sydney Crook Room:

- Adventures in Learning, instructor meetings, 1/8, 3/26, 4/3, 6/19/2014 – approved.

Other Items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher
- 2013 Equalization Municipal Assessment Data Certificate

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London