



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES November 10, 2014

PRESENT:

Janet Kidder, Chair
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Phyllis Piotrow, New London Resident
Renate Kannler, New London Resident
Jean Connolly, Center for the Arts
Bob Brown, Joan Lamson, James DeVere, Members of the Single Stream Recycling Committee
Minette Sweeney, *The Intertown Record*

Chair Kidder opened the meeting at 6:00pm. She said the first order of business was a presentation by the Single Stream Recycling Committee.

James DeVere presented the committee's report and summarized it by noting that the committee recommends that New London not adopt Single Stream Recycling (SSR) at this time. This is the conclusion the committee came to after researching the cost to New London to make the needed changes at the Transfer Station. He explained that the committee didn't see any increased positive effects on the environment by adopting SSR. The committee consulted with The National Recovery Resource Association (NRRA), DSM Environmental Services of Vermont, and Public Works Director, Richard Lee.

Mr. DeVere explained that the operational expenses included a contract with a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) which can be as high as \$53,000 per year and is subject to increases. In order to adopt SSR, the town would need to reconfigure the transfer station, purchase a compactor at a cost of about \$20,000, and a transportable recycle bin/truck body at about \$70,000. An educational program for the citizens of New London about SSR would also need to be coordinated.

It was noted by Mr. DeVere that SSR seems to work better for large communities that have curbside pickup. The large volume of recyclables these types of communities can contribute enables them to be able to negotiate a good contract with the MRF. New London is just not large enough to negotiate such a contract. The Town has, however, negotiated a low tipping fee with the present landfill, which is the cost charged to send material there. New London also sells their recyclable materials and gets a good price for them which helps to reduce the cost for the waste system. Mr. DeVere shared that the consultant from NRRA agreed that SSR wouldn't work well in New London. Any benefit to the environment was questionable. If the Town were to simply increase their rates of recycling, this would help reduce the amount of materials going to the landfill.

Recommendations offered by the SSR Committee include:

- Conducting a recycling education program in the town to increase the number of residents who recycle; there is always room for improvement
- Form a solid waste management committee
- Evaluate increasing type of plastics that can be recycled at the transfer station
- Look at the overall operation of the transfer station to look for places that can be improved
- Evaluate the transfer station to see if it will meet the future needs of New London
- Evaluate SSR down the road if things change and it is warranted

Mr. DeVere thanked the Town for the opportunity to study SSR.

Selectman Bianchi thanked the committee for their work and thought they did a good job. Selectman Rollins thought they offered excellent recommendations.

Joan Lamson, a member of the SSR Committee said she signed the report the committee came up with, but has some reservations about their conclusions. She commended the members of the committee, who studied statistics, costs and benefits using the computer but thought it would have been beneficial to have gone to visit some other places that offer SSR, as well as go to a SSR plant. She said Alison Seward, secretary, did a great job with the minutes and getting them to her.

Ms. Lamson believes that a savings and environmental benefit would be realized by employing SSR because less garbage would be sent to Berlin. Also, sending the recycling out via SSR would mean the transfer station workers wouldn't have to bale materials, so there would be a savings in man-power. She said Mr. Lee estimated that maybe half a worker would be saved by eliminating the need to bale recyclables. In SSR plants (such as Casella) they accept the rigid plastics (#s 3-7) that hold things such as yogurt and salad. These plastics are also baled at the plant and are not sent to a landfill. Plastics 1 & 2 are worth a lot of money as opposed to #s 3-7. Ms. Lamson thinks it is beneficial to keep all of these plastics out of the landfill as they can be recycled.

Ms. Lamson referenced the figure of \$31,185 that was given as the amount brought in from recycling in 2013. She wondered if this was a true number; did it account for the labor costs of employees having to bale the materials. Ms. Lamson noted that New London would still be able to keep the glass as it is used by the Town for use in the roads. (New London crushes and grinds glass to be used in roads along with sand and gravel). She added that Doug MacMichael, a SSR committee member, has a business where he picks up people's curbside trash and noted that he informed the committee that about 30% of his customers do not recycle at all. Ms. Lamson observed that perhaps by having SSR, it would convince them to recycle more.

Ms. Lamson said NRRA is the company that buys New London's recyclable materials and they don't believe in SSR. She thinks other people should have been consulted other than NRRA. Ms. Lamson added that she visited Colby-Sawyer College and saw how they have their SSR program set up. She also visited Kearsarge Regional Elementary School in New London at lunchtime and the kids are enthusiastic about recycling and understand how they have to separate things. Food is even separated to go to animal farms. Mike DoCurren, Facilities Manager, is excited about how well the recycling is going. Kearsarge High School used to create five truck loads of garbage per week. Now they have just one truck load and they recycle the rest. All the classrooms have bins for recyclables and trash and kids are encouraged to rinse their containers so there is a better chance they will be accepted at the SSR facility.

Ms. Lamson said she also visited Andover's transfer station. She described it is a very large facility with areas for everything you might want to recycle. She thought the New London transfer station was very

picturesque but built 30 years ago. When it was built, she said it was done in a hurry, out of necessity, and there is no room to expand. She said Mr. Lee envisioned the stump dump and transfer station being in one area at some point. She realizes that these changes will all take time. Ms. Lamson believes for all these reasons and more, the Selectmen should appoint a solid waste management committee; this wasn't something that was going to go away but would just get worse.

Bob Brown, member of the SSR Committee opined that it was unfortunate that Alison Seward could not be there that evening. She did a tremendous job with Mr. DeVere to put the report together. They were all a bit disappointed in the outcome of the research. His sense was that SSR would be a good thing but it turns out that it would probably cost a little more to the town. Their study clearly proves that the benefit of SSR isn't there for New London at this time. He commended everyone for the work they did.

Mr. Brown clarified that NRRA is a non-profit group and New London and many other towns are members. He noted that he did not get the impression that NRRA is against SSR, pointing out that NRRA never said they did not recommend SSR for New London; they said that it did not make sense at this time, based on the costs and the benefits. Mr. DeVere said the reason they didn't visit the facilities in person is because they could see videos of them online which saved them time.

Ms. Piotrow said she doesn't know the difference between the categories of plastics that can be recycled and agrees that education for the citizens is important. She suggested getting the elementary school children involved in making posters to help with the education.

Ms. Hallquist said the Town received a letter from Doug MacMichael, another member of the SSR Committee, saying he agrees with the report and thanks the Board of Selectmen for including him on the committee.

Chair Kidder asked Ms. Hallquist to draft a letter of thanks to be sent to all the members of the SSR committee for their time and effort.

Town Administrator's Report

Grinding at the Stump Dump

Ms. Hallquist said she went to the Stump Dump on Tuesday to see the grinding of the brush that had accumulated over the last year. Due to the threat of the Emerald Ash Borer (an invasive species identified in the county and across New England), New London has not been able to bring their residents' brush to Durgin and Crowell in Springfield, NH because it is located in Sullivan County. There is a ban on the transporting of brush over county lines at this time due to the Emerald Ash Borer. Mr. Lee had estimated that it would cost \$4,000/day to have a company come and grind the brush. It came in under budget at \$3,890 and Mr. Lee was satisfied with the work.

Clark Lookout Access Road Closure

It has come to the attention of the Town that the property on which an easement is held by the Town to access Clark Lookout has been closed by the owner of the property. A letter has been sent to the owner of the Clark Lookout access road but they have not heard back as yet.

Mary Haddad Trust

Ms. Hallquist said she spoke with the Chair of the Trustees of the Trust Funds about the need for a protocol to hold, and expend, funds from the Mary Haddad Trust. The Selectmen said they would like to see the protocol themselves before any funds were accepted.

Building Permits

Ms. Hallquist explained that a new Building Permit form and process was in the works that would require applicants to provide more information to the Town. Simpler building permits will be completed in a timely manner by getting this information up front. Furthermore, this should help eliminate applicants from having to come back to the office to answer questions or provide more details. The Board will review the proposed new permit application and make comments as necessary.

Signs

Ms. Hallquist noted that election time brings out sign issues due to the large number of political signs that appear in Town, in addition to the snow plowing and real estate signs that have recently shown up. Most recently some banner signs were put up by the Center for the Arts (CFA), which is allowed for non-profits, which they are. A business in town noticed the banners and alerted the Town, as the business had put similar signs up this past summer and were asked to take them down. This is where the sign ordinance can get confusing. Ms. Hallquist explained that one sign from Center for the Arts did have to come down as it was at Whipple Hall, which is not part of a zone that allows that type of a sign. At the site where the function is going to take place (Whipple Hall), the underlying district regulations must be obeyed. In this case, a sign no larger than four square feet would have been allowed.

Ms. Hallquist said her issue with the sign ordinance is enforcement and asked what the Selectmen would like to do to enforce infractions of the ordinance. They have the ability to fine people \$275/day for illegal signs, as it is written in the ordinance. They could continue with calls, letters and visits instead of fining people. Ms. Hallquist wanted it known that citizens are calling the office angry because the rules are not being enforced.

Chair Kidder asked if the Town was allowed to go onto someone's property and take a sign. Ms. Hallquist said if someone put a sign up on Town property, town staff could take it down but not if it was on private property, without first alerting the property owner and asking them to remove it. Generally, when people are called and informed that their sign needs to come down, they take it down. If a phone call doesn't work, she follows up with a letter. Ms. Hallquist opined that perhaps people don't know the regulations or if they do, they choose to disregard them.

Selectman Bianchi said the enforcement issue has been brought up many times in the past. On the Planning Board, they are working on some changes in the zoning with signs, among other areas. Two members of the Planning Board informed him that they are not excited about working on these changes if the Selectmen won't enforce them. Selectman Bianchi agreed that enforcement is imperative. He felt the town has an extensive zoning ordinance and parts of it were brought about by special interest groups. It isn't just signs that fall under the enforcement issue. If ordinances are passed by the townspeople, they should be enforced. He agreed that a letter sent by the Town is the best approach. A reminder letter, if needed, and a call to notify them about the \$275/day penalty if the signs are not taken down. He felt 95% of problems would be taken care of by this friendly way of asking people to stop using signs that are not allowed.

Selectman Rollins agreed that enforcement was important but thought most people weren't aware of the sign ordinance. She thought letters were a good idea, as well as perhaps offering a palm card with the rules about signs to those who are found to have illegal signs. If the friendly requests are not adhered to, they could then move on to enforcement.

Jane Connolly, CFA Chair said they are non-profit and don't have a lot of money to advertise and they use signs to get the word out. The day of the event they find it good to use their signs. She spoke with Ms. St. John and didn't know that Whipple Hall was zoned differently than Main Street. They were grateful to

the Town for being able to work out of Whipple Hall and to work with Mr. Blewitt in Recreation. When they have an event, they would like to use their signs to let people know it is happening. She wondered how they can comply and still tell people they are having an event. The events they are advertising are free for the community. The sign is up at 9am and down at 7pm the day of the event. She wondered if CFA could possibly get a waiver.

Ms. Connolly shared that in a town she lived in for many years, there was a place at the transfer station where banners could be put up by those having events. It was put up away from the general view, but the residents could see what was going on. Ms. Connolly wondered what they could do to let people know about their events.

Chair Kidder thought they had given waivers in the past for signs. Selectman Bianchi said they hadn't. Ms. Hallquist noted that the Zoning Board of Adjustment can grant waivers, or variances, to the terms of the zoning ordinance but the Selectmen cannot grant waivers. Selectman Bianchi said there are a large number of non-profits that do work in the Town so they can't allow one group to put a sign up somewhere if others are not allowed. It was agreed that the current sign ordinance is difficult to understand.

Ms. Rollins wondered the intent and purpose of some of the sign regulations. It is important for people to know what is going on in town, especially visitors who come into town. She thought there should be a conversation about the intent and wondered what the crafters of the ordinance were trying to accomplish.

Selectman Bianchi feels the zoning has grown in ways that make it contradict itself in some parts. There are other portions of the Zoning Ordinance that they need to discuss and determine their purpose.

Ms. Connolly said she would work with Ms. St. John to comply with the regulations. It was understood that the rest of the signs (besides the one at Whipple Hall) were OK.

Chair Kidder said over time the ordinance has lost its clarity in intent due to many amendments and additions.

Nobis Engineering – Engineering for Lagoon Closure

The Board noted receipt of an estimate for the engineering to design the closure of the sewer lagoons. Ms. Hallquist wondered who would be paying for this study; the whole town or just the sewer users. She said it would be a minimum of \$23,000. They could either use existing funds in the budget or wait until Town Meeting and get the vote to use Capital Reserve Funds. The Selectmen felt this was an expense the entire town should be responsible for.

Selectman Bianchi didn't recall authorizing RFPs for closing the lagoons. Ms. Hallquist said there were no RFPs; Nobis was asked to provide an estimate so that the Board would have an idea of how much to appropriate. She noted that during the last budget session, Budget Committee members took exception to requests to fund the Capital reserve Fund when nothing had been done to get an estimate of costs. She noted that Nobis is the firm that has been doing the town's solid waste related monitoring and they are most familiar with the sewer lagoon issue. Selectman Bianchi thought they should get more proposals from other engineering firms due to the potential cost of the project. Ms. Hallquist said Nobis has been involved in the lagoons since the beginning and they know the history of the area. Selectman Bianchi thought there were other firms that do this kind of thing and more quotes should be attained. He didn't feel this was an urgent matter. If the State pushes them to move forward, they should, but this is not the case. He thought they could go for another 20 years without worrying about a problem with the lagoons.

Chair Kidder disagreed with Selectman Bianchi and said it is time to do something about closing the lagoons. She agrees that it would be good to get other engineers to weigh in on this but thought the issue needed to be resolved permanently and correctly.

Selectman Rollins said the document provided by Nobis includes a presumption that town staff would do some of the work for the closure. She thought it important to have Mr. Lee identify what they actually could do. She said this is just a study to get the lagoons ready to do the actual work. There were add-ons that would make the price increase, depending on what other factors may come into play as they delve deeper into the project. Saving money by using the Town's resources could be key.

Selectman Rollins said it would be helpful to have additional proposals at this time so they will know the range they will have to spend. Chair Kidder said it is an environmental issue that is important and hasn't been dealt with. They should get more proposals and act.

Selectman Bianchi said he was surprised that this project didn't come up in the recent CIP discussions, considering the ultimate cost the Town will need to pay.

Set Fees for 2015 Dispatching Service

Ms. Hallquist referred to the table she had provided showing the 2015 dispatching fees to be charged to the six towns receiving services from New London dispatching. The formula is the same used for the past several years.

Selectman Bianchi noted this was option #2 as was discussed at previous meetings, including the October 11th CAC meeting where representatives from each member town of New London dispatch were present. He felt strongly that when the fees for 2015 are sent out, the towns should be informed in the letter that in the future there is a possibility they will be charged for capital expenses. He noted that there was some suggestion of establishing a cooperative or a compact between the towns, however there are several questions still outstanding such as: would all the towns have to be involved in this compact?; do they all have to agree on the terms of the compact?; under whose initiative would such a compact be established?

Selectman Rollins said they agreed that this would be the next step relative to recalculating the formula for the administrative costs for the future. In a letter to the member towns, they could inform them of an anticipated next step which was to reconvene to talk about a continued commitment that would include capital costs and begin a discussion about how a compact would look. She recalled those at the meeting on October 11th were interested in this idea and wanted to be a part of it. Selectman Rollins said New London should be the leader in getting the towns together and getting the discussion going and added that Chief Andersen had talked with two other towns that were possibly interested in joining New London's dispatch service. Perhaps the net should be broadened to include these other towns moving forward.

Chair Kidder wasn't sure a long term agreement was a good thing for New London. She questioned whether they want to tie themselves to an agreement? With changes in technology the town could find itself in a position where it could not sustain the service at a cost the taxpayers could afford. She said during the budget process the Fire and Police Chiefs would provide the numbers they feel appropriate for dispatch and the discussion will continue. She thought they should continue meeting with the other towns individually to discuss their thoughts going forward. She suggested sending the bills out and then waiting to see the towns' reactions and gauge what their enthusiasm for dispatch is at that point.

Selectman Bianchi agreed with Chair Kidder regarding long term agreements; he also didn't feel they were a good idea for the town.

It was noted that the agreement they are asking the member towns to sign right now is for one year, 2015. Ms. Johnson reminded those at the meeting that even though New London is planning their budget for 2015-2016, the other towns are on a calendar year so are anticipating 2015 costs only.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to adopt the formula (option #2) for billing towns for dispatch services for 2015. THE MOTION PASSED.

Nancy Rollins: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes, Peter Bianchi: No

Fire Department Request to Serve Alcohol

It was requested that the Fire Department be allowed to serve alcohol during their annual Pay Night dinner, to be held at the Fire Station on December 8th. The date of the dinner, which the Selectmen are invited, was the same night as their scheduled Selectmen's meeting. Ms. Hallquist suggested changing the date or time of the Selectmen's meeting so they could attend. It was decided to change the meeting time for the December 8th meeting to 4pm instead of 6pm.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the serving of alcohol at the Fire Department's Pay Night Dinner. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Committee Meetings & Reports

Recreation

Chair Kidder said all the events that were held recently (Pumpkin People, the Haunted Walk) had a great response. Scott Blewitt (Recreation Director) would like to thank Colby-Sawyer College students and Springledge Farm for their efforts. There were over 50 participants (residential and business) in the Pumpkin People contest.

The first annual Walk to School Day, in memory of Chad Denning, was successful. New London had the largest participation of any other town in the area. Colby-Sawyer College helped by allowing the busses to be parked on campus and some of the college students walked along with the kids to the elementary school.

Chair Kidder announced that the traditional event with Santa will be either the first or Second Saturday in December. Winter Carnival is slated to happen January 21-24, 2015. Mr. Blewitt is thinking of hosting a strawberry festival as a future event this spring.

As far as budgets go, the split rail fence at Elkins needs to be replaced. Elkins also needs a bathroom renovation to make it ADA compliant, as well as another dock, More sand is needed at Bucklin beach.

School Board Representatives

Chair Kidder said she met with Kevin Johnson and Carter Bascom, New London's School Board representatives. They believe the budget will increase 2.5%. This increase reflects a contract approved for staff by voters. Enrollment has stabilized after a five-year downward trend and they are seeing increased enrollment in the elementary schools.

Approval of Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve minutes of October 27, 2014, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

Citizen's Advisory Committee – Saturday, November 15th at 7:30am – Tracy Library

Planning Board Meeting – Tuesday, November 18th at 7:00pm
Conservation Commission Meeting – Wednesday, November 19th at 8:30am
Selectmen’s Meeting – Tuesday, November 25th at 6:00pm

**Veterans Day Program: Tuesday, November 11th at 10am, First Baptist Church, Main Street
Town Offices Closed on Tuesday, November 11th for Veterans Day including: Town Office,
Recreation Department, Department of Public Works (including the Transfer Station) and Tracy
Library**

Application for Building Permit:

- Paul Bianchi & Barbara Dunbar, 363b Bunker Road (062-022-000) – Build 3,000 sq’ home – APPROVED
- Morris Edwards, 84 Fairway Lane (124-008-000) – Remodel walk-in closet – APPROVED
- Eric & Jennifer Linn, 949 Andover Road (077-042-000) – Convert detached office back into a garage – APPROVED
- Town of New London, 48 High Pine Road (044-015-000) – Build 9’ x 12’ building to house pump controls – APPROVED
- William Perkins, 318 Sugarhouse Road (035-020-000) – Demo existing Pump House and replace with new - APPROVED

Application for Use of Whipple Hall:

New London Garden Club – Plant Auction Sale May 18 – 19 – APPROVED

Application for Temporary Signs:

First Baptist Church – Front lawn of 461 Main Street 11/15 – 11/22

First Baptist Church – Front lawn of 461 Main Street 12/6 – 12/14

Lake Sunapee VNA & Hospice – Info Booth 11/12 – 11/22

Lake Sunapee VNA & Hospice – Kearsarge Presbyterian Church driveway 11/20 – 11/22

Other Items to be Signed:

Intent to Cut – Pleasant Street (048-003-000) Mary McMenemy

2 Pole License Petitions (Burpee Hill, Birch Acres Road)

Sewer Betterment Property Tax Levy – Edmunds Road

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London