



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

375 MAIN STREET • NEW LONDON, NH 03257 • WWW.NL-NH.COM

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES January 20, 2015

### PRESENT:

Janet Kidder, Chairman  
Nancy Rollins, Selectman  
Peter Bianchi, Selectman  
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator  
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

### ALSO PRESENT:

Ed Andersen, Police Chief  
Phyllis Piotrow, Budget Committee Member  
Minette Sweeney, *The Intertown Record*  
John Wilson, Budget Committee Member  
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief  
Linda Hardy, Town Clerk/Tax Collector  
Sandra Licks, Library Director  
Steve Ensign, Board of Firewards  
Lucy St. John, Planning & Zoning Administrator  
Richard Lee, Public Works Director  
Hank Thomas, Newbury Fire Chief  
Town of New London Employee Committee Members: Amy Rankins, Administration; Tom Anderson, Police & Dispatch Department; Donna Larrow, Police & Dispatch Department; Jo-Ann Roy, Tracy Library; Andy Guptill, Public Works Department

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

### Employee Personnel Committee – Report to the Selectmen

Amy Rankins thanked the Board of Selectmen for allowing the Employee Committee to present at the meeting. She introduced the members of the committee and noted that the topic of their presentation was sparked by discussion at an Employee Committee meeting in July when Chair Kidder was in attendance. The Committee felt that she was not aware of the many changes that had been made over the last ten years or so, with regards to employee benefits. The committee's goal was to explain the changes employees have made over the last ten years for not only the benefit of the newest Selectman on the Board, Nancy Rollins, but also to update the entire Board on how employee benefits have changed to what is currently offered. The Committee presented a PowerPoint presentation.

The presentation illustrated the history of pay increases between 2005 and 2014. Raises had been as high as 6% in some years (3% + 0-3% merit) when merit raises were in effect, which ended in 2009. The lowest raise was in 2009, which was 1.2%, the first year that merit raises were discontinued. 2010 saw a

raise which would only offset the cost of out-of-pocket expenses for the increased insurance premiums the employees had to pay. In 2014, raises were at 1.5% across the board.

Changes in insurance plans, co-pays and prescriptions were reviewed. Increases in employee co-pays began in 2005. In 2009, prescriptions co-pays increased, and employees were mandated to order refills through a mail order program, which saved the town \$30,000. It was noted that new employees as of 2012 contribute 15% of the total cost of the plan for all plans (employees hired on or before December 10, 2012 contribute 4% for a single plan, or 10% for a two-person or family plan).

With regards to the insurance deductibles, it was noted that in 2012 the deductible increased from \$250 per person/\$750 max to \$1,000 per person/\$3,000 max. The Selectmen approved covering the first \$1,000 of the insurance deductible, per employee, for which the employees are appreciative. It was also noted that employees appreciate the option to purchase the Blue Choice POS (Point of Service) plan, even though it costs more for the employee.

A table was shown, providing details on how the insurance programs had changed from 2005 until present day.

In addition to the policy that new hires must contribute more to their insurance than those hired after December 10, 2012, those employees hired after January 1, 2013 also accrue less leave time than those hired prior. It was suggested that perhaps some changes could be made in the employee policy to allow new hires to get their two weeks of vacation up front and not have to wait to accrue their time. It was also suggested that at the end of the year, employees should be allowed to convert their unused sick time to vacation time as an incentive for them to stay healthy and not abuse sick time.

Other changes were made to the personnel policy over time. In 2007 the Bereavement Policy became more narrowly defined, restricting the use of bereavement leave to the deaths of specific family members. In 2012, Christmas bonuses were eliminated for employees. Full-time employees had received \$100 and part-time employees had received \$50. Employees had felt that this was a nice token of appreciation from the Town.

Selectman Rollins asked about the Bereavement Policy. Ms. Hallquist said the three days allowed are available immediately when needed for the death of an immediate family member, and are not limited, so that an employee with more than one death in the family would be allowed three days for each. Mr. Anderson said the policy states that the time can only be taken when specific people die (the personnel policy defines immediate family as: spouse or domestic partner, children, step-children, parents, brothers, sisters, step-parents, step-brothers, step-sisters, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparents and grandchildren of the employee).

Other changes to personal days and holidays include an increase of one paid holiday: Martin Luther King Day, to 9 holidays plus 2 floaters for a total of 11 days. Lastly, the 1994-2007 policy included three personal days (deducted from sick time). The current policy does not allow the conversion of sick time to leave time. When the policy changed in 2007, however, general leave time was increased to compensate for loss of sick time.

With regards to sick time, effective January 2013, employees were no longer able to buy out any unused sick time. Prior to 2007, 15 sick days were given per year with a maximum accumulation of 90. Currently, 7 sick days are given with a maximum accumulation of 30.

There was some discussion regarding merit-based bonuses, which were intended for only full-time personnel. It was suggested that employees whose performance over the previous year is considered exceptional would receive a \$1,000 bonus. Those whose performance is considered above average would receive \$500.

The Committee ended their presentation by suggesting that the Selectmen consider the information they have provided for future planning. They stressed that open dialogue between the employees and the Selectmen is important and that employees would be appreciative to maintain a voice prior to changes being made. It was noted that the employees are grateful for the benefits they receive and while they understand that changes have been necessary during tough economic times, they hope that when times improve, the hard working, dedicated employees are rewarded.

Selectman Bianchi asked if there was any thought given to the fact that a single policy employee has no deductible (because the town pays up to \$1,000 of an employee's deductible, which is the entire exposure faced by a single employee) while two-person and family plans have an exposure of \$1,000 and \$2,000 respectively (after the town's \$1,000 is paid). The committee noted that they were unaware of any complaints on that issue. Selectman Bianchi opined that considering the lower costs for health insurance in FY2016, that means that employees paying for a family plan will be getting a \$300 raise.

Selectman Bianchi wondered if there had been any consideration on having performance-based bonuses based on a percentage of the person's salary. He said a \$1,000 bonus for one person on a higher pay scale, compared to someone on the lower end of the scale, would be a difference in percentage of a bonus for both employees. Ms. Larrow opined that lower salaried individuals would be appreciative of receiving a \$1,000 bonus. She added that there wasn't a lot of money in the budget for merit bonuses right now. Mr. Guptill noted that a set fee type bonus as suggested would simplify things for budgeting purposes instead of having to calculate percentages of raises for each individual receiving one. It was estimated that just 25% of employees would get a bonus. Selectman Bianchi didn't see the benefit of having a two-tiered bonus system. Ms. Rankins said it would incentivize people to try to reach the top tier. Ms. Larrow said they researched other towns and found this kind of bonus system to be common.

When asked, Ms. Rankins said they haven't talked as a committee about the criteria for merit bonuses, but she had a list that she had been compiling and shared it with the Selectmen. She suggested that criteria for awarding merit bonuses should be based on performance, going above and beyond job specifications, participating in continuing education and training, striving for more, not abusing sick time, participating in employee-related events, performing community service, and making safety awareness a priority.

Selectman Bianchi wondered what the Employee Committee would recommend for an across the board pay increase? Ms. Rankins said this hadn't been discussed by the Committee. Selectman Bianchi said the Board of Selectmen would be interested in hearing what the Committee's suggestion might be on this. The Committee would be happy to discuss across the board pay increases and would report back to the Selectmen.

Linda Hardy asked if merit bonuses were something part-time employees could be eligible for. Ms. Rankins said they would like to start only with full time and maybe work in part-time employees later on.

Ms. Piotrow wondered what considerations the Board of Selectmen were taking with comparing other towns and similar positions. Chair Kidder said New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) provides that data to all the towns. They are cognizant of what the other communities are doing. Ms. Piotrow thought the Selectmen should consider the fact that some of New London's employees could be offered jobs in other towns because they are so good and other towns would pay them more. Selectman Bianchi

offered that sometimes the information provided by NHMA isn't helpful because it doesn't tell the person's experience and longevity, etc. It only gives the amount of salary for a position.

Ms. Rankins said when New London compared themselves to similar communities with similar demographics and size, they found New London to be in the middle of the pack. Ms. Larrow said job titles and descriptions differ, which makes things difficult to compare.

Selectman Bianchi said they have a detailed pay scale and wondered if the committee had looked at that at all. Ms. Larrow said they had not looked at it as a group but she did look at it with regards to other towns and their police departments.

The Board commended the Employee Committee for an excellent presentation and thanked them for their work.

#### Equipment Needs for Dispatching – Chief Andersen

Chief Andersen prepared a report from which he read the following:

*Good Evening,*

*I just wanted to run down a brief history of New London Dispatch since my involvement in the early 90's until today and where I think we should set our sights. I think it is important that the select board know and understand that I have personally been a dispatcher for this agency and covered dispatch up until 2014. I sat in the chair monthly and dispatched for 8+ hour shifts. I have a very good understanding of what it takes to do the job and the stressors that come with it. Also, being a Chief in another town, it gives me a good understanding of what keeping or outsourcing means to this agency.*

*When I started dispatching for New London we worked off an old toning board which required you to punch in numbers to send out a tone. They had just upgraded from a type writer to computer software programmed in DOS. Recordings were held for 60 days on a Dictaphone. Dispatch was in a 15' by 15' room with two phone lines. On busy nights officers would have to answer the phones in the officer's room and run the message to the dispatcher. Back in 1992 we had 4 full time dispatchers and three part-time dispatchers and have been working on this model since I have worked for New London. I noted in the 1998 town report that dispatch cost \$150,000 annually. We were putting away \$10,000 dollars in a capital reserve for a Dictaphone. Also \$10,000 dollars was put away in capital reserve for dispatch equipment. In 1998, the town roughly put away 13% of total budget for capital reserve. Had these capital accounts been maintained, we would have the funding we are in need of today.*

*Dispatch received its real first face lift when we moved into the new building in 2001 just 13 years ago. The building and equipment was state of the art for the time. The console systems that were installed were considered the best you could get. At that time they had a seven to ten year life span. We currently have 13 years on the systems and they are no longer supported. The door security systems were top of the line and talking with other vendors we had the best that money could buy in the system. The radio room was moved to its own room included with the sprinkler system. Since 2001 minimum monies have been spent maintaining or upgrading our systems.*

*In 2006, Dispatch had a rough budget of \$260,000.*

*Bringing ourselves up to date for the year 2015 looking at the 2015/16 budget, where does dispatch sit in the present condition? We have an operating budget of \$361,000. This covers all items to operate dispatch, from employees down to miscellaneous items. A few items are still split by police/dispatch such as phone bills, the computer server and my management costs. New London is currently paying 61% of this cost.*

*As of June 2014 we were using a single radio tower located at New London Police Department. This tower, when I first started here, worked great. Police and fire portables were at 10 watts. This allowed me, at my home in Goshen, to talk to dispatch in New London. Narrow banding came along and regulations on portable strength from the government put portable wattage down to 5 watts. Narrow banding has greatly reduced the coverage from the cruiser radios. This caused issues with the area towns. We needed to start to make changes. We applied for a grant that would allow us to put in a huge infrastructure for New London Dispatch. This was approximately \$800,000 dollars and was a 100% grant. We did not get this grant. This number also started some members of the community looking at outsourcing dispatch. We have spoken many times of the pros and cons of keeping or outsourcing dispatch. I will quickly say that I have worked for towns that outsource and there are many reasons that keeping our own dispatch is important to this community. A few people are stuck on the cost and not taking into account the service.*

*By the end of 2014 we made a very large step at improving dispatch for New London and the surrounding communities. We added a repeater to Mt Kearsarge, which is a single tower similar to what we have in New London. This greatly increased radio coverage to some towns like Wilmot, New London, Sutton, and Newbury. However there was some reduction in radio signal strength to towns like Sunapee. The goal that New London dispatch should shoot for is portable radio coverage for all towns that we dispatch for, at 95% of the time across 95% of the coverage area. The reason I discuss this is why we want to move in phases from one site on Kearsarge to 3 sites. This would include Kearsarge, New London Tower and a Tower at Mt. Sunapee. I have provided a graph in the Beltronics packet pages 4 & 5. I would also like to point out as we have heard from the department meetings that the surrounding towns are happy overall with the service of dispatch, just unhappy with the maintaining of equipment and upgrading the infrastructure. The equipment on Mt. Kearsarge is capable of upgrades as opposed to replacement. It will support eventually going to digital versus analog. It will also support P25 digital communication protocol. The towns that are not at 95% can install trunk repeaters for their cruisers which will bring portable transmission use up to 95% in most towns if the officer operating a portable radio is 1,000 feet or less from their cruisers. Again our goal is the 95/95 for straight portable transmission.*

*This brings me to my suggested plan if we are to keep Dispatch in New London. Dr. Wilson and I have had many meetings with two vendors, Ossipee Mountain Electronics and Beltronics. We went through*

*all of the radio systems with Ossipee Mountain Electronics in 2013. Dr. Wilson and I had a lengthy meeting with them in early December. We also met with Beltronics around the same time. Both vendors promised proposals by January 15th. Beltronics presented theirs and Ossipee Mountain, despite numerous communications, has not.*

*Beltronics' complete proposal would cost \$375,000 to totally build out their proposed plan. There would also be an additional capital expenditure over the next 15 years for system upgrades and infrastructure refreshment.*

*Our primary need is to upgrade our aged consoles. During their life, they have experienced 2.6 million transmissions or about 22 transmissions per hour. The cost to replace these two consoles would be \$135,000. The cost to upgrade one console, if we are to not keep Dispatch, would be \$107,500. Infrastructure replacement, at a cost of about \$80,000, must be done whether we procure one console or two. \$48,500 was appropriated at the last Town Meeting to buy one console. This number was incorrect.*

*The second phase of the proposal would build out two additional repeater sites at Whipple Hall and Mount Sunapee for \$200,000. These added sites would mostly lead to improved coverage in the surrounding towns but would also provide some improved coverage in New London. The added repeater sites also add redundancy to the system in case one site was to go down. They incidentally provide very good coverage to other Towns which are not presently subscribers to New London Dispatch. The proposed Whipple Hall site and the Mount Sunapee site each cost about \$100,000 to build out and do not need to be done at the same time. The Whipple Hall site should be done first since it provides a much greater increase in coverage to the surrounding towns. It also provides immediate redundancy or back up if the Mt. Kearsarge site were to go down.*

*The Mt. Sunapee site provides further coverage in the Sunapee area and further increases the protection of more redundancy.*

*The remaining \$40,000 would be to replace the base radios located in Whipple Hall. This could be done over a two year period.*

*Finally, the proposal projects capital expenses of \$185,000 over the next 15 years for upgrades and infrastructure refreshment. The proposal offers a great amount of redundancy or protection against break down, but it doesn't address the issue of a backup dispatch site.*

*I think we should also look at another site that will host or act as our backup in case of a major disaster, such as Newbury or Sunapee. What works very well with this is our console has capabilities for this change if needed. The infrastructure will need to be set up at the next location.*

*:*

*\$107,500 is needed for the first console whether we stay or outsource. Take away \$48,500 that has already been appropriated, this leaves \$59,000 that still needs to be appropriated by New London.*

*\$27,500 for the second console to be paid for by a grant or by subscriber towns.*

*\$240,000 for the remaining build-out to be paid for by a grant or by subscriber towns (this can be phased)*

*\$185,000 capital reserves paid for over 15 years by subscriber towns*

*Costs if we outsource:*

*\$107,500 for console*

*\$40,000 for base radios*

*\$147,500*

*(\$48,500 has already been appropriated.)*

*Going with Merrimack County and an unknown fire dispatch needs to be discussed.*

*Merrimack County has given a rough estimate of approximately \$60,000 to dispatch New London. This is just for critical dispatch and not the other services that the residents of New London have come accustomed to. Sherriff Hilliard made it clear to me that if we go with Merrimack County, we would lose ownership of our radio frequencies. He will use them as an east bank to which he will add other communities such as Bradford, Warner and communities in that general direction. This means that New London will not be a priority, but will fall in line with the calls that come in. I would assume that towns like Wilmot, Newbury, and Sutton would be forced to move over to Merrimack County as the only logical option. This frequency has shown to be busy enough with the towns we cover. They will be adding other communities to this frequency. I have provided our numbers for calls for service to the Sheriffs agency and they were taken back with just how busy New London is. For 2014, I took our total calls for service of 1,466 and I removed the calls that dispatch would not log or receive if covered by Merrimack County and that drops us down to 9,827 calls for service. This, according to Merrimack County Head Dispatch is a staggering amount of calls compared to other communities our size. As discussed above we are currently paying roughly \$243,891 to keep dispatch with no capital reserve or upgrades. The following are rough figures that should be tightened up once the decision has been made.*

*Keeping Dispatch in New London:*

*\$243,891 plus \$107,500 (already have \$48,500)*

|                                   |                   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Cost at 61% for New London</i> | <i>\$243,891</i>  |
| <i>Console</i>                    | <i>\$107,500</i>  |
| <i>In Reserve</i>                 | <i>- \$48,500</i> |
| <br>                              |                   |
| <i>Grand total over next year</i> | <i>\$302,891</i>  |

*As listed above the capital expenses should be spread at a reasonable amount throughout the towns we dispatch for.*

*Outsourcing Dispatch:*

*\$ 60,000 estimate for police*

*\$ 51,000 estimate for fire*

*\$107,500 for console*

*\$ 60,000 for added employee to PD with benefits*

*\$ 12,480 for part-time dispatcher*

*\$ 40,000 for base radio*

*\$ 35,000 to \$40,000 software change to communicate with Merrimack County - TriTech*

*\$ 5,000. Reprogramming portable and cruiser radios*

*\$ Long distance phone charges (Unknown cost)*

*\$ 23,400 Fire Pagers*

*Total rough guess \$394,380+ to outsource for the first year.*

*Costs going forward would be approximately \$183,480/year, plus telephone expenses, software maintenance, capital accounts for equipment maintenance/replacement that the police department will be required to maintain.*

*Things that will be lost:*

*A dispatcher for our highway department*

*The continuity of all our emergencies being handled by the same dispatch*

*The continuity of all the surrounding towns on the same dispatch service together*

*The Fire Dept will need to restructure how they handle calls.*

*All the hundreds of calls that come into the "526-2626" phone line with questions about the Dump, Town offices, when is Hospital Day, and general calls after business hours will no longer be answered. A local dispatcher knows our community and information residents are in search of. Calls between fire and police will be delayed and could be lost because of the human factor, and minutes save lives.*

*What is the cost to switch back if we are unhappy with the service of outsourcing? We will not be able to recover our frequencies*

*What if the formula used by Merrimack County is changed? This is an unknown. New London would have no control.*

*As your Police Chief I am in favor of keeping dispatch in New London for the above stated reasons. If dispatch is kept in New London, I will be excited to work with the other towns and the challenges that we face about making it financially feasible for all towns, while planning for the future. I feel if we show*

*commitment in keeping dispatch, the towns that have been with us since I started dispatch 20 plus years ago will not leave. They will see that we have started on the right track of moving forward again. I think as our infrastructure is improving, we will be able to attract additional towns.*

*Thank you for your time tonight. Dr. Wilson and I are happy to answer any questions that you may have.*

Chief Andersen summarized by noting that Beltronics did a good job laying out the needs of New London. He referenced a hand-out showing the radio coverage, which considers portable coverage. Adding the Mt. Kearsarge site makes a marked increase in coverage. Three sites together cover just about all towns at 95%. Trunk repeaters can be used to increase coverage but officers have to be 1,000' or less from the cruisers for them to be effective.

Referring to the Beltronics list of expenses from 2014-2030, Chief Andersen noted that Beltronics assumed New London would get the grant for the repeater on Mt. Sunapee which explains why it is included in the list of equipment for 2015. Unfortunately, the grant was not awarded to New London so it will not be done in 2015. He also noted that the dispatch consoles listed in 2016 need to be purchased now, not in 2016. Redundancy and coverage makes New London's tower their second phase. This will cost about \$4,000/year per town that can be put in a capital reserve to reach this goal, which isn't a staggering amount.

Chief Andersen noted that part of the expansion in New London would include an extension on the tower that is already there. This would give another radio site should something happen to the tower Mt. Kearsarge.

Chief Lyon gave an account of being at a call only 2,000' away from dispatch and not being able to call dispatch with his radio. He actually had to leave the building to go to his car to communicate with dispatch.

Chief Andersen thinks New London should bear the cost of the first console, which is \$107,000 and then bill the other towns for the second console (\$27,500) next year. He thought they should have another meeting with the member towns if/when New London decides to keep dispatch in New London. They now have the costs figured out to keep dispatch going until 2030.

Selectman Rollins question why there was no quote from Ossipee Mountain Electronics. Chief Andersen said Ossipee Mountain claimed they were working on an estimate but they never sent it in. In the past they have said it takes a lot of effort to provide such a quote and are not interested in doing it unless there is a good chance New London will change vendors.

Chief Andersen thought the formula needed to be worked out for charging the towns so it is fair to them and to New London. He would like to meet again with the other towns now that they actually have figures.

Selectman Bianchi asked what the estimate for \$80,000 in 2014 which was listed in the Beltronics list of expenses. Chief Andersen said that was for the repeater at Mt. Kearsarge which has been completed; it ended up being a little over \$75,000, the town had a 50-50 grant to pay for it.

Chief Andersen said if the other towns decide to leave dispatch, New London would still need one new console, which is why he feels New London should purchase it now. He felt if they had done a better job keeping up on the reserve funds, they wouldn't be where they are now.

Chief Andersen said from his view, if they upgrade the console and provide double dispatchers, they are making improvements that are making the other towns happy. Newbury has expressed their satisfaction with the increased radio coverage from the Mt. Kearsarge tower. The towns anticipate an increase in cost and can see what they are getting for it.

Chief Andersen said to move forward with dispatch in New London, they will need to appropriate \$107,000 for the console, which will add redundancy and improve coverage. It will cost another \$380,000 over the next 15 years and all the member towns will need to be part of this upkeep, equally. Chief Andersen said there are still grants out there that they can get. He feels half of the necessary money could be attained through grants.

To disband New London dispatch and outsource, it will cost \$400,000 the first year and then \$180,000 per year afterwards, assuming the rates remain the same.

Selectman Bianchi asked if maintenance agreements were included in the cost. John Wilson said they were not and felt that the prices they could get for maintenance could come in at a lower rate than what Bob Barry of Primex suggested in his dispatch report, which was 7% of what the equipment costs. Chief Andersen thought maintenance agreements should be shared by all the towns. They were not included in the prices given in the packet.

Dr. Wilson offered that one diagram not present in the information packet is one that shows the coverage attained by the combination of the towers on Mt. Kearsarge and at Whipple Hall. Coverage is almost the same as with the three sites, so getting the second site makes a huge difference. The third site fills in some holes. Dr. Wilson added that the equipment they are discussing is superior to what Merrimack County has. Merrimack County has outdated Motorola equipment and they are having problems. The equipment Beltronics is offering can be improved upon and migrated and much of what it can do is already present in the system, it only needs to be "unlocked" to access additional functionality.

It was noted that Merrimack County offers an average of 50% coverage in the New London area, which is much less than what New London's system could provide.

Dr. Wilson hoped that the Board of Selectmen could finally make a decision on this matter as it has been pushed off for a long time.

#### Continuation of FY2016 Budget Planning

*Lucy St. John – Planning & Zoning Administrator*

Ms. St. John referred to her four-page memo, outlining her budget.

There is a proposed increase of \$4,000 for additional hours under the P/T Secretary line to help with organizational items. Ms. St. John stressed that it is critical that the Town keep public records accessible. Chair Kidder wondered who would do this work. Ms. St. John said they don't know right now but perhaps Chris Work, Clerk, or Kristy Heath, Office Assistant, could help. There was also the thought that perhaps an additional part-time person could be hired.

Ms. St. John said she would like to increase the line item for training, which would be intended for staff and new board members. New members are interested in keeping abreast of issues and understanding the

laws. Currently, there are three board members interested in attending these kinds of workshops and trainings.

Ms. St. John said she increased the line item for her own professional development. She would like to attend the American Planning Association Conference, as she has done in the past in other positions she has held. She feels it is important as a planner to get out and interact with other planners and make connections for future collaboration.

Selectman Bianchi said the Planning & Zoning budget is up \$7,700, which is 9.1%. Of that is salary, which is \$6,000.

*Administration – Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator*

Ms. Hallquist suggested a salary increase for the Selectmen. The idea was brought up last year but didn't go anywhere. She also said that in light of the employee committee's presentation, they may want to consider increasing the Selectmen's discretionary fund to \$10,000, which is where bonuses would come from.

**Assessing Services**

Ms. Hallquist said the Tri-town Assessing Board has shared that their budget will go up this year. She noted that they are on the calendar year and New London is on the fiscal year, so budgeting for New London is part guess-work since the actual budget for Jan. 1, 2016- June30, 2016 is not known yet.

**Legal Services**

Ms. Hallquist recommended a decrease to \$22,500 which is a guesstimate. There are no huge cases pending at this time but that could change.

**Personnel Administration**

Ms. Hallquist said although they haven't used the employee tuition reimbursement in a while, she hopes that employee are encouraged to take advantage of it. If the Board decides to make continuing education part of the criteria for bonuses, it would be helpful to keep that in place.

**Employee Benefits**

Ms. Hallquist thinks they should keep \$10,000 in the fund for the deductibles. The practice of the Town covering the first \$1,000 deductible per employee is very much appreciated by the employees.

**General Government Buildings**

Ms. Hallquist offered that the town knows a lot more about the buildings now than in the past. She didn't see any decreases in this line. The Capital Reserves Subcommittee thinks the town should bond to make major repairs, but they will still need enough money to maintain the buildings on a day to day basis.

Other budget considerations to remember are:

1. Sunapee wastewater treatment bond payments will start in FY 2016
2. The position of a Code Enforcement Officer which Ms. St. John touched upon in her budget recommendation is something many, including Town officials, have suggested over the years. Perhaps getting a part-time person in the town to go out when buildings are being built to make sure they are doing what they are supposed to. This person can also check on signs. Ms. Hallquist suggested the position could be as little as 8-12 hours/week and it would be well worth their money to have someone on staff to do that.
3. The chairs at Whipple Hall are dangerous and are uncomfortable and suggested the Board consider budgeting to replace the chairs. Ms. Hallquist referred to the chairs at the library's

Community Room. They have had them for four years and they look brand new. She thought maybe having nicer chairs would encourage people to attend meetings and functions there. Scott Blewitt (Recreation Director) recently had to throw many chairs out because they were not even usable.

*Finance Administration – Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer*

Ms. Johnson noted that the big items in her budget are computer licensing fees. Things haven't really changed a lot; they still pay for payroll processing, the internet, Munismart licensing, Vision software, Arc View software, Cartographics, invoicing in the Cloud, equipment leases (postage meter and copier) and maintenance costs. Dues and subscriptions to NHMA are \$5,600 which is a .9% increase over last year.

*Linda Hardy – Town Clerk/Tax Collector*

Ms. Hardy said she was asking for four areas in her budget to be increased this year, as described below:

1. Wages for the Deputy TC/TC. Ms. Hardy said the FY 2015 wages were figured on a 25 hour/week schedule which was set when they hired the original person for the position. These were the hours that were amenable to the new employee and that is how she set her budget. That employee has since left and her new deputy is more flexible and available to work more hours. Between training and general traffic in the office, having the deputy there 32 hours/week while still keeping it under full-time is making the office run very efficiently. She would like to increase the total budget for that. Ms. Hardy said she didn't take into account a raise which might happen in July. For each position (Deputy Town Clerk and Deputy Tax Collector) she would like to increase from \$16,200 to \$16,700. Ms. Hardy said she lowered the overtime wages line by \$300 for both Deputy Town Clerk and Deputy Tax Collector because they rarely need to use it.
2. Ms. Hardy would like to increase the training line for both Town Clerk/Tax Collector budgets. She said there is a certification program and other trainings available to get certified in New Hampshire. She would like to see her deputy go through the program. It consists of one week a year for four years.
3. Ms. Hardy said there were some ergonomic changes that need to be made to the deputy's workstation, as documented in the evaluation done by Primex. This would come from the Office Supplies line. Specifically, the deputy could benefit from a different chair and a keyboard tray that slides in and out instead of one that sits on the desk.
4. Ms. Hardy said she would like to add \$100 to the stipend for each of the Supervisors of the Checklist. They are increasingly being called upon to do more computer work and the job is getting more involved. There hasn't been an increase in their stipends for several years. Ms. Hardy also noted that costs for elections will be up due to the presidential primary adding another election.

Town Administrator's Report

*Elkins Sidewalk*

Ms. Hallquist noted that the Elkins sidewalk plans have been turned in to the State DOT for final review, one day before the deadline. Selectman Bianchi noted that the final plans will require additional funding. Ms. Hallquist agreed and noted that depending on what the DOT requires, the overage will likely be under \$40,000 which means we would have to get something less than \$32,000 more in grant money and under \$8,000 from the town. Richard Lee (Public Works Director) has indicated that he will find the necessary town funds in his budget to make it work. Ms. Hallquist noted that the increase is due largely to the guardrails needed as members of the Elkins Committee suggested a strong preference to guardrails

that will look good, and not the silver steel guardrails that are on the highways. She noted if there is no grant money available, they will have to change their plans to cut back on the prices. Mr. Lee said he heard that a few other projects that were due in to the State last week weren't passed in so the chances of there being available funds looks good.

*Volunteer Requests*

Ms. Hallquist said they have had a couple new volunteer requests filled out for open positions within the town. She hoped they could discuss this further next week.

*Tracy Library Closure – Sandra Licks, Library Director*

Ms. Licks said the library was closed that day and would be closed the following day as well. They had a pipe burst the past Sunday and air quality issues were becoming evident. Multiple employees were having allergic, respiratory reactions. On Friday, four employees came in fine and once started working started feeling sick. Tuesday morning she arrived at the library to find another pipe had burst. Servepro and plumbers were to be in the next day. The children's area will be closed for a bit and they are not sure when it will be open again. Ms. Licks said the two bursts look to have been because of frozen pipes due to the cold weather but she was not sure about the air quality issue.

Chief Lyon asked about Carbon Dioxide detectors at the library. Ms. Licks said there are detectors on each floor and added that the symptoms were respiratory in nature and not like those from carbon monoxide poisoning.

*Engineering Study – Whipple Hall*

Ms. Hallquist said the draft report from Dennis Mires, P.A. on Whipple Hall have been received. Mr. Mires has been contacted about additional information needed in the final report including a list of priorities and years included. It was not as thorough as she thought it would be.

*Bandstand Engineering*

Mr. Lee said they would be getting a design for a bracket to splice the beams. They are still waiting to get the plans.

Committee Meetings & Reports

*Nancy Rollins – Capital Reserve Committee*

Selectman Rollins said they have met several times and the staff has done a great job. The most salient point she concurred with was that they, as a board, need to take all of the costs for various buildings and issues they have and put them together and seek a bond to get things done. She added that the committee recommended asking for the engineering report for Whipple Hall as soon as possible, as it could be included in this bond.

*Peter Bianchi – Planning Board*

Selectman Bianchi said at the last meeting the Planning Board discussed signs, which is a hotly contested topic. They would be having another work session the following week.

*Janet Kidder – Recreation Commission*

Chair Kidder said the Recreation Commission discussed activities for Winter Carnival, and how the skating rink has been. They also discussed the Strawberry Festival being planned for June.

Approval of Minutes

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to approve the minutes of January 5, 2015, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Upcoming Meetings and Special Events

Conservation Commission Meeting – Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at 8:30am  
Citizen’s Advisory Committee – Saturday, January 24, 2015 at 7:30am – Fire Station  
Board of Selectmen’s Meeting – Monday, January 26, 2015 at 6:00pm  
Planning Board Meeting – Tuesday, January 27, 2015 at 7:00pm

Other Business

Selectman Bianchi was concerned that they may not have enough meetings scheduled to get all their work done by February 4<sup>th</sup> when they planned to submit their budget to the Budget Committee. Chair Kidder suggested seeing how far they get at the next meeting and if needed, they can plan another meeting.

Application for Building Permit:

- Meller Family Trust/Vedova, 123 Parkside Road (073-008-000) Interior renovations – APPROVED
- Gene & Nancy Lindsey, 135 Old Route 11 (056-021-000) Interior renovations – APPROVED
- Brian & Michele Frankiewich, 176 Gay Farm Road (057-002-000) Interior renovations - APPROVED

Application for Use Syd Crook Conference Room

New London Historical Society – “Scytheville Factory Village” program - 1/21/15 6pm – 10pm  
– APPROVED

Other Items to be Signed:

- 2014 Equalization Municipal Assessment Data Certificate
- Warrant Yield Tax Levy, State of New Hampshire
- Highway Safety Grant Application
- Employee Birthday Cards

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London