



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES February 3, 2014

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Ed Andersen, Acting Police Chief
Donna Larrow, Police Department Administrative Assistant
Bill Granger, Facilities Manager
Fred Downey, New London Resident
Minette Sweeney, *Intertown Record*

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 8:00am.

Facilities Manager – Budget

Bill Granger said the warming hut needed some attention including some replacement of trim, some stain and paint. The Academy Building is in need of new clapboards and paint. Whipple Hall needed more attention than the Academy Building, however. There are gutter issues at Whipple, which is causing flooding. The flat roof on the Police Department gets a large portion of the water from the gutters and they need to eliminate the water from where the generator is and where the flat roof comes together.

Mr. Granger said 9-10” of insulation is standard in the attic area of a building but in some places in Whipple Hall, he identified only 3-4” of insulation. The study they are planning to conduct will help them figure out how the building operates and what needs to be done. He thought the gutter work and painting of the doors at Whipple Hall would use up the \$6,000 allotted for repairs to that building.

Selectman Bianchi said the CIP has the Academy Building slated for painting this year. He asked Mr. Granger if he felt it would be a better use of money to make repairs to Whipple Hall. Mr. Granger said this was his feeling. He noted the areas at Whipple Hall that needed repair, including the ceiling that had fallen down in one space and feared it could fall in others. This area will need to be repaired and painted. He thought sprinkling the building should be included in with the study that is to be done of the mechanical and HVAC systems of the building.

Selectman Kidder suggested that they could put a little less funding in the GIS update line item and put another five or ten thousand dollars into the repairs that needed to be made at Whipple Hall. Selectman Bianchi noted that as of June 30, there was a little over \$88,000 in the Capital Reserve Fund that could be used for repairs at Whipple Hall.

Chair Helm said the warming hut was built by an Eagle Scout five or six years ago. She wondered if there was any ongoing maintenance that came along with the project. Ms. Hallquist said she didn't believe so

as projects of this sort do not usually include ongoing maintenance by the Eagle Scout. Mr. Granger said the warming hut needed a new door, some trim needed to be replaced, and it needed a paint job. He would be able to make the repairs himself this spring. Selectman Bianchi thought all these repairs could come out of the current budget.

Selectman Kidder wondered about the safety recommendations from LGC at the Town Office. Ms. Hallquist said the counter at the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office needs to be done as soon as possible. The report also identified security cameras and locks on all inside doors as possible improvements. Mr. Granger noted that there is a modular set-up that they could purchase for use in the Town Clerk- Tax Collector's Office but he didn't have all the figures back yet. Ms. Hallquist said they could do the work between two budget seasons but noted it was a very important job that needed to be done.

Chair Helm asked about repairs needed at the Fire Station. Mr. Granger said Chief Lyon only asked him to replace some trim but told him that the firefighters take care of their own building for the most part.

Mr. Granger said making the Elkins Beach Bathhouse ADA compliant would take a lot of time and effort because it was a concrete structure. The building, otherwise, looks to be in good shape. He said it does need a new door on the back.

The Elkins Post Office has a few shingles that need to be replaced. Mr. Granger said Mr. Lee thought maybe they could put a metal roof on the building. Mr. Granger said it wasn't leaking but he sees pieces of shingle inside the gutter. He added that he hadn't been inside the building yet so wasn't sure what was needed inside.

Ms. Johnson noted that some time ago there was money put in a fund to repair the Town Clock. The funds have been used to clean the clock and is now down to about \$300. They could get one more cleaning out of it but will then have to start paying for it themselves. It costs about \$260 for a cleaning. Ms. Hallquist said Bruce Parsons is looking into the situation to see what is wrong with the clock.

Ms. Hallquist thought they should deposit \$3,000 into the Pleasant Lake Dam Maintenance and Repair fund in the event the gate was to malfunction again.

Mr. Granger thought the budget was satisfactory. There is patching and repairing that could be done but his main concern was Whipple Hall and the work that is needed there. Mr. Bianchi said the other critical building people see all the time is the Town Office building. It could use some painting and there are some shingles that needed to be replaced. Mr. Granger agreed that some measures could be taken to spruce up the Town Office building.

Mr. Granger said it would be a challenge to access the zone valves that are in the ceiling at the Town Office. He thought maybe more access panels would need to be put in to be able to reach zones. If/when the valves start to fail, they will have a problem getting to them. He said he would consult with the furnace company they use for the Town Office building to see what he would suggest as far as replacing these valves before they fail. It may be a good idea to do this to avoid problems in the future.

Selectman Kidder said she thought it would be a good idea to spruce up the display area on either side of the stage at Whipple Hall. She wondered if more money would be needed to add trim and paint that area. She also thought they should put the flags back up that used to be there. Mr. Granger thought perhaps they could have the people who will be in Whipple painting the ceiling that needed repair (discussed earlier) to also paint those areas. Chief Andersen said the glass for the flag display was still at the Police Department.

Ms. Hallquist thought that perhaps since they have Mr. Granger on the staff, they should put some more money into the building maintenance fund because more maintenance will be done. The Selectmen agreed. Selectman Bianchi said they are playing catch-up with deferred maintenance and it won't be cheap to get back on track. The Board reviewed a list of the FY2014 appropriations for the town buildings maintenance and repair accounts. The total as presented was \$29,360.

Selectman Bianchi said they had been told that the hot water heater at Whipple Hall was gone and wondered what Mr. Granger's take was on that. Mr. Granger said he wasn't sure of the function of the heater. He said his impression was that if it was electric it probably hasn't shut off since the day they put it in. They really need an engineer to come in and offer advice on what needs to be put in for a heater. It was said by Mr. Anzalone that the hot water in the showers was coming from the boiler, which is not ideal. Ms. Larrow noted that in the past, the hot water could not make it up to the dispatch area. They put in the electric water heater to get the water up to the upstairs areas. The element burned out a year ago and Century recommended replacing the heater with an electric water heater, which was expensive and they did not do it. Later on they had Century come in and put a new element in the heater to get the water up to dispatch. Chair Helm asked how often the showers were being used. Chief Andersen said at times people work out in the work-out room and shower before coming in to work. At times people will come in to wash up after an accident or incident. It wasn't clear whether or not the hot water was boiler water.

The Board requested that the line items for Town Hall maintenance and Academy Building maintenance each be increased by \$2,000 and Elkins Beach maintenance by \$1,000. The total for the buildings as adjusted was \$37,360.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to appropriate a facilities maintenance budget of \$37,360.

Mr. Downey thought consideration should be given to the possibility of the Town leasing a 24,000 square foot building and wondered if they had done due-diligence to consider the fact that this building may have hazardous materials within it. He didn't know the Town had a Facility Manager and thought he should review the reports from the 1941 building. Selectman Bianchi noted that the Town didn't own it and wasn't leasing the building at this time.

Chair Helm called for a vote on the motion to appropriate a facilities budget of \$37,360.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Police Department Budget

Chair Helm asked Acting Chief Andersen if he would like to speak with regards to the top priorities within his budget.

Chief Andersen submitted a sheet with revised figures for various budgeted items. He noted that he has reduced accreditation fees. They would also have one line item for vehicle maintenance for \$10,000. He said they are down to one cruiser now due to one having been in an accident. It is anticipated that the cruiser will be out for two weeks. The Expedition had a manifold gasket go and it is going to be fixed at Grappone, which should take about a week to repair. He recalled several times in the past when the department was down one vehicle and they were stuck having to use their own vehicles or having two officers using one cruiser. He would like to keep the oldest cruiser as a spare to be used during these circumstances. Ms. Johnson said this extra cruiser would not cost the Town any more for insurance to

keep it in the fleet. Chief Andersen said the vehicle would only be used in instances when they are down a cruiser. He would like to see the car remain in the fleet for another year and after that year they would get rid of it. Selectman Bianchi didn't think five vehicles for a Police Department was necessary. Chief Andersen said he understood but it is a tool that is used every day. Two cars are out on the road all the time except for after midnight and on Sundays when they go down to one.

Selectman Kidder asked if the Town pays mileage to those officers having to use their own vehicles. Ms. Johnson said they do and it is currently \$.56 per mile.

Chief Andersen noted that he has learned recently that budgeting laws require that he budget the total amount needed to purchase new firearms, including the trade. The total would be \$8,836.50 but this doesn't take into consideration their trade-ins. The cost to refurbish the guns they have now would be about \$3,300. He thought they could do a full swap for new guns for \$1,798 which would be less than it would be to refurbish the current ones.

Selectman Bianchi didn't believe a part-time officer would need a brand new gun. He wondered how often the guns were used. Chief Andersen said the guns are used to dispatch animals and during training. Selectman Kidder wondered if they could phase in some guns this year and some the next. Chief Andersen said they would like to get a different type of firearm this time around and if they kept two kinds, they would need to purchase two different kinds of ammo. The sites on the current firearms are not functioning 100% either. He would like to go to a Glock firearm for the department.

Chief Andersen said the copy machine at the department needs to be addressed. It is well past its expectancy at 12 years old. Ms. Larrow said based on their usage, they are told the life expectancy of the new machine would be five years but they could perhaps go to 10. They were asked what the buyout would be, and were told it would be 20% of the sum of the payments, which would be \$1,300 additional after paying \$6,000 in payments. She has found that another nearby agency uses a different vendor and she has a call in to them to see if they can get a better deal. Chief Andersen said he had cut out the office furniture request. He also cut down the Hirsh Electrical by \$4,000. Belltronics was reduced as well.

Selectman Bianchi said the requests from the Police Department totaled \$46,490.50.

Chief Andersen said with regards to the needs from Hirsh Electronics, (buzzers and security system to get in and out of the building) they have run into issues but could maybe go another year without any more; there is no way of telling.

Chief Andersen said the \$1,700 in the firearm estimate is to get new holsters and ammunition pouches. Ms. Hallquist said the funds from the sale of the old guns would have to be approved at Town Meeting to go towards the purchase of the new guns. Otherwise, the funds would go back into the general fund.

Ms. Johnson said the 2009 SUV should be \$3,000 not \$2,500. Chief Andersen said they would have just one line item for \$10,000 for all the cruisers.

Chief Andersen informed the Board that he wanted to make it known that there could be a problem with doors in the Police Department. He explained that the strikes in the doors (the mechanism that allows remote opening) sometimes stay on and keep buzzing instead of shutting down which leads to heating up of the area in the wall which could lead to a fire. Ms. Larrow said there was not a lot of smoke, but there was a lot of heat when one of the strikes malfunctioned. She indicated that the smoke alarms did not go off and they were able to catch it in time before it got hot enough to start a fire. This may not be the case if one of the strikes in the basement malfunctions and no one is around to hear the buzzing.

Chief Andersen suggested that the town establish a revolving fund to pay for things like portable radios that may die, new winter jackets, etc. which could be helpful during difficult budgetary times. The fund would have to be approved by the Town at Town Meeting and the Selectmen would be agents to expend. The revolving fund would be made up of money charged for special details. Chief Andersen noted that the fund would not get any larger than \$5,000. These funds could be helpful to deal with areas where issues come up and funding has not been appropriated. Ms. Johnson said this year the Department has brought in \$4,300 from special details. Chief Andersen said the bulk of the special details happen during the summer. Currently the money billed for special details goes into the town's general fund. The Board will take this suggestion under advisement.

CIP

Chair Helm said the next item on the agenda was to review the CIP as recommended by the Planning Board. Selectman Bianchi said the CIP is meant to enable the Town to save for large items to prevent a blip in the tax rate. He identified several places where deposits were made every year and the same amount withdrawn every year, and he questioned whether a capital reserve fund was needed in these cases. Ms. Hallquist noted that if an item is purchased yearly, then a capital reserve fund doesn't make much sense and it makes more work for the trustees of the trust funds. Capital reserve funds are designed to save for larger purchases over a period of years, or to have money for unexpected large expenditures.

Ms. Hallquist noted that if the town purchases a police cruiser every year, then it would be easier to just appropriate the money within the budget. If this is the case, there would need to be a vote at town meeting to discontinue the current capital reserve fund for the cruisers. This would eliminate the step of putting the funds into a savings account, just to take it out again. Selectman Bianchi said years ago, they used to appropriate funds for a cruiser every couple of years instead of saving the funds each year in a capital reserve. It was noted that if there are years when two cruisers are purchased within a year, then it would make sense to save for that additional cruiser to avoid the additional expense to be added all in one year.

With regards to the Town Maintenance fund, Ms. Hallquist thought perhaps the Selectmen should increase this amount. This is due to the recent information regarding Whipple Hall and the possible major upgrades needed there. Selectman Kidder said she has heard from real estate agents that they use the survey and deed when talking about properties. Because of this, she didn't feel that the GIS update was as important as some have thought. Ms. Hallquist said it is more about accuracy for citizens to keep track of their properties and for the town to have accurate tax maps, than anything about property deeds. Chair Helm thought Ms. St. John had indicated having the GIS upgraded was important. Ms. Hallquist said there is no question in her mind that it is worth doing, but they need to make choices between what they can afford and what they need.

Ms. Hallquist asked if they still planned on funding the Pleasant Lake Dam \$10,000. Selectman Bianchi thought this was the case. Selectman Kidder thought they should really talk about this issue; how many of the State's dams are at the 250 year storm benchmark? Making a small town try to achieve this goal is a lot to ask, especially when maybe the State is not doing this with their own dams. She thought this was an issue that needed more discussion and perhaps they should seek legal advice as she felt that it is an enormous burden on a small town. Ms. Hallquist said they have a letter of deficiency from the State and are in a high hazard classification due to the potential for loss of life if the dam is breached. They had Wright-Pierce do a breach analysis to try and get a lower rating (instead of the high hazard rating), but a change in classification was denied by the State. Selectman Bianchi said some people suggested they should just get rid of the dam altogether. That is one way to avoid this. Ms. Hallquist said there was some suggestion that the town could just purchase the properties in question (and remove the homes) as a way

to solve the problem but it was determined that it is not possible as it would require buying several properties all along the potential flooding areas. Ms. Hallquist noted that currently there is no state funding to assist towns with these kinds of projects, but if legislation is enacted to fund grant programs at some point in the future, perhaps New London could get some financial assistance.

Selectman Bianchi said with regards to Bridge Maintenance and Bridge Repair, The CIP committee recommends a \$5,000 contribution. At some point they may need to tend to some bridges, but right now they seem to be OK.

It was agreed to keep the sidewalk fund at \$20,000 for this year.

Fire Equipment Replacement CIP contribution recommendation was at \$18,500. The Fire Equipment Refurbishment and Replacement fund would be ending next year. Selectman Bianchi suggested level-funding this and reducing it by \$2,000.

Selectman Bianchi said the HVAC at Whipple Hall wouldn't be done this year but perhaps next year. He thought with regards to the Town Building and Improvements they should bump it up to \$50,000 in anticipation of future costly repairs to the building.

Funding for library building improvements is recommended at \$35,000. It was noted that this is the level of funding expected for the next several years. This is in addition to their regular maintenance deposit. Chair Helm observed that the amount last year was \$30,000. The Selectmen decided to level fund it to \$30,000 this year.

The Town Building Maintenance Fund - Department of Public Works \$85,000 will be expended in FY2015 to replace windows, repair the floor and replace the insulation.

With regards to the Elkins Sidewalk Project, they need to come up with \$160,000. Selectman Bianchi thought there was \$64,000 in the Intersection Fund and about \$100,000 in the Sidewalk fund. He reminded the Board that they were responsible for 20% of the total project which was to come from the Sidewalk and Intersection funds. Selectman Kidder said there was \$159,489 total between the two funds. They would also be adding \$20,000 to the sidewalk fund this year, which would make up the shortfall.

Sewer Equipment & Replacement – Ms. Hallquist reminded the Selectmen that Mr. Lee wanted to bring the controls in the High Pine pump station above ground as they are currently underground.

Ms. Johnson said the CIP recommended adding more funds to the Gravel Roads Program. Mr. Lee thought he would be able to do more than what was once thought, and on a faster timeline.

Bonded Debt: Chair Helm said these were commitments they had been made previously, so there wasn't anything they could really do about them. She asked what the Facility Bonds were for. Ms. Johnson said it was for the Highway Garage in 2005 and the Fire Station in 1999, the Academy Building and Whipple Hall.

Selectman Bianchi wondered why the total on the construction sewer treatment plant had 16 payments that come up to \$3,276,000. Ms. Johnson said it is actually a 20-year bond. Ms. Hallquist said it is because the table ended 16 years out but the bond actually goes out to 20 years.

Selectman Kidder wondered what the Energy Committee had for a budget. Ms. Hallquist said they only have a budget of about \$400 to cover recording expenses by the Recording Secretary. Ms. Johnson said

they just had a big ad in the Shopper to promote a workshop. It seemed that the committee was re-energized and Chair Helm commended them for doing so.

United Way letter

Mr. Downey said he was there to discuss a letter from The United Way. Chair Helm thanked Mr. Downey for being very patient. She said this was a fairly intense time for them until they present the budget to the Budget Committee on February 12, 2014. She said they would acknowledge receipt of communications from The United Way, and in the next week or so they would be discussing more of the 1941 Building. The United Way has sent communications to the Town and has clarified their position in the matter with regards to the New London Community Center (NLCC) and the potential use of the 1941 building as a community center.

Mr. Downey said with respect to the \$25,000 annually from The United Way, Mr. Kaplan from the NLCC is still talking about this funding and it just isn't available to the NLCC. He added that the second paragraph of the letter refers to the fact that the New Kearsarge Community Center (NKCC) and United Way would be partners in a Community Center; it wasn't something that had been agreed upon with the NLCC group. Mr. Downey identified two other agencies that would commit financial assistance to the NKCC and said they have a different vision and mission than the NLCC. Chair Helm said the Selectmen had a lot on their plate and wanted to do the right thing by both groups. They have not fully discussed where they would go as of yet. The Board of Selectmen asked the 1941 Committee to be on their own and they have made presentations to the Selectmen. She asked Mr. Downey to be patient until after February 12th to make his presentation. It doesn't necessarily impact the budget they are working on right then. Mr. Downey believed he was on the agenda for February 10th as indicated by Ms. Hallquist a few weeks ago. Chair Helm noted that the Selectmen would not have time for any appointments at their meeting of the 10th as the Board must finish the budget to turn it over to the Budget Committee on the 12th. Chair Helm said she would be happy to have Mr. Downey come to the meeting on February 24th to give him his due chance to present.

Mr. Downey said he has suggested that the NKCC and the NLCC work together and help each other out. He is unable to get a response back from those on the NLCC and feels they will both be hurt if they don't work together. Chair Helm said all things being equal Mr. Downey will be placed on the agenda for February 24th. She apologized for any misunderstanding that was made with regards to him being on the agenda for February 10th.

Bandstand Committee

Ms. Hallquist said the Bandstand Committee met with the Trustee of the Trust Funds to find out how much interest was earned for this account. Chair Helm said she thought a year ago when they discussed this, the Board agreed they would turn the interest over to the Bandstand Committee to be used for the summer bandstand concerts. Chair Helm questioned which bands would be playing the 11 planned concerts and which band would be charging \$800.

Selectman Bianchi said if the Bandstand Committee is a Town committee, they don't have to pay fees to use the common/bandstand. They are asking, on their application, that the fees to be waived, however they have said in the past that they do not believe they are a town committee. He didn't think they could have it both ways. Selectman Kidder said she didn't care where the bands were from; they are bringing music to Town and she loved it. That is what Steve Mendelson wanted.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) that the interest of \$11,599 be forwarded to the Bandstand Committee in support of the summer band concerts.

Chair Helm wanted to know what the concerts were and which concert cost \$800. Selectman Bianchi said he didn't want to vote on this until he knew the answers to Chair Helm's questions.

Chair Helm called for a vote: THE MOTION PASSED. Chair Bianchi opposed.

Minutes of January 22, 2014

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes of January 22, 2014, as amended.

Upcoming Meetings

It was suggested that the Selectmen schedule another meeting on Friday, February 7 at 8:00am. They would also be meeting on Monday, February 10 at 6:00pm. Chair Helm suggested scheduling another meeting for Wednesday, February 12 at 8:00am in the event they needed more time to finalize their budget before the budget meeting that evening at 6:00pm.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Application for use of Town Common:

Bandstand Committee – 2014 Summer Concert Series – Approved

Application for use of Whipple Hall:

Bandstand Committee – 2014 Summer Concert Series – Approved

Other Items to be signed:

- Application for Current Use – Charles & Miriam Nelson, 070-012-000
- Warrant for a special election on March 11, 2014 at Whipple Hall from 8:00am – 7:00pm
- Petition and Pole License from TDS Telecom/Kearsarge Telephone Company

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

The meeting adjourned at 11:45am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London