



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES March 2, 2015

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Minette Sweeney, *Intertown Record*
Phyllis Piotrow, Budget Committee Member
Renate Kannler, New London Resident
Bruce Parsons and Frank Anzalone, Buildings Committee Members
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Rob Prohl, Budget Committee Chair

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

Town Administrator's Report – Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator

Ms. Hallquist said the only issue she wanted to bring up had to do with the report by Dennis Mires regarding Whipple Hall, which would be covered by Richard Lee and members of the Buildings Committee.

Old/Pending Business

Discuss Whipple Hall Buildings Report by Dennis Mires, PA

Bruce Parsons said he had not read the report on Whipple Hall yet and was under the impression that the Buildings Committee had been disbanded. He added that Jim Wheeler resigned from the committee, but he and Frank Anzalone are interested in continuing if the Selectmen need their assistance. If they are to continue, they would like to find another person to be on the committee with them. Chair Kidder said the Town would welcome the input of the committee on the Whipple Hall report and down the road, other projects having to do with other Town-owned buildings.

Chair Kidder said she wants to decide that evening whether or not they should put \$100,000 in the Town Building Maintenance capital reserve fund to reside the Academy Building. Mr. Lee has an estimate of \$150,000 to re-side the building, apply one coat of paint, and replace trim. The final caulking and finish paint would have to be done at another time. If there was any sheathing damage found under the clapboards that would be additional. Mr. Lee recommends that \$160,000 be set aside for this project, which would leave \$10,000 for unexpected repairs that may come to light when the siding is removed. Ms. Hallquist said adding \$100,000 would bring the total in the fund to \$217,000, which could address the Academy Building and painting Whipple Hall (including the police station) and the cupola.

Selectman Bianchi said he has been up in the cupola at Whipple Hall and believes the wood is in good shape. The windows need to be glazed and the cupola needs to be painted but he does not believe that

repairs will be extensive. He thought perhaps the Fire Department could put a ladder up to allow an exterior inspection of the structure to see if there was any visible rot.

Mr. Lee said that included in the price to paint Whipple is to have the gutters cleaned out and oiled. He feels the gutters will need some minor repairs. Mr. Anzalone said taking care of the gutters is important; as cracks and leaks means that the bricks on the building can be damaged by water.

Mr. Prohl suggested instead of putting money into the capital reserve they should bond for both buildings so that more than just the exterior can be addressed. He thought they should get a picture of exactly everything they want to get done. If they package the work together they will get multiple bids which would benefit the town. He thought they should wait a year to do any work and have the Town work on getting these details together. This would eliminate the additional \$100,000 they are suggesting putting into Capital Reserves this year which would lower the budget, reducing the impact on the taxpayers in the coming fiscal year.

Selectman Bianchi said Dennis Mires' report suggests Whipple Hall needs \$574,000 worth of repairs over the next five years. He felt that within a year from that day, the Board should have a good estimate on some of the projects they should do. Bonding over 10 years would allow them to get these things done in not only Whipple Hall, but in other areas of the town. Mr. Parsons asked if they would be looking at a larger cost to the Town if they put off some of these projects for one year. Selectman Bianchi thinks that the critical life-saving issues should be addressed at both the Academy Building and at Whipple Hall. He thinks there is enough money in the capital reserve to take care of these things now.

Selectman Rollins said they need to have a planning process that is thoughtful about their long-range needs. She is concerned about Tracy Library and the flooding that keeps happening there. She thinks a schedule should be created to address one area in town at a time.

Ms. Piotrow wondered if the outside siding of the building is related to anything that needed to be done to the inside of the building, or could the siding be done before other projects. She thought perhaps the outside should be tended to before it contributes to more extensive damage from rotting. Would this project need to go into a master plan or should it be considered as a maintenance issue. Ms. Piotrow said it would take time to put together a detailed package for people to bid on and she worried that construction costs won't go down and interest rates would be rising. Chair Kidder thinks they should increase the amount of money going in to the capital reserve to be able to address the current immediate needs of the buildings.

Mr. Parsons asked how they were doing with the gazebo. Chair Kidder said they are waiting for an engineering report on the post that holds the roof on. Mr. Lee said the engineer would be coming back to look at it the following day; he thinks the design is ready.

Mr. Parsons asked if Whipple Hall being put on the registry of historic buildings would open up any doors for funding. Chair Kidder said perhaps it would for "moose plate" money, but L-Chip money was not widely available any more.

Ms. Piotrow said they should make the issue simpler by addressing one building at a time. There are big, controversial questions about the future of Whipple Hall that need to be considered and that will take some time. Mr. Parsons said he didn't think they should wait a year at Whipple to paint and clean the gutters.

Selectman Bianchi thinks the costs for repairs to the Town's buildings should be borne by not only the people living in New London now, but also those living in town several years down the road. That is why he is in favor of bonding; he thinks this is a reasonable way to repair the Town's major infrastructures.

Ms. Hallquist questions if the siding on the Academy Building should be put off any longer, given that it has been deteriorating for several years. She suggested that doing the work this summer, before the building gets any worse, should be considered. Ms. Hallquist questioned whether enough information could be gathered on the other town buildings in time to consider a bond at the May Town Meeting. She doesn't think it is a good idea to wait. Mr. Parsons thinks they should look at a contingency amount of another 10% at least to deal with the sheathing in the event that it was damaged. Mr. Anzalone suggested adding another 20%.

Chair Kidder noted that she recommends dealing with cosmetic issues at Whipple that can be taken care of now. If the Board requests the addition of \$150,000 in the capital reserve fund they should be able to get all the cosmetic issues taken care of. She agreed that bonding is the best way to go monetarily but they won't know for some time what the future use of the buildings will be as public input and discussion is needed. Ms. Piotrow thought there would be more conversation about the use of the 1941 Building when discussing the future of Whipple Hall. She thought it would take a long time before people would agree on what the best thing to do is with the spaces they have.

Selectman Bianchi thinks it is too bad all the decisions are being made without more than one estimate. Chair Kidder said it is only an estimate and they know the cost to side the Academy Building will be over \$100,000. Mr. Parsons said just because they put money into capital reserves doesn't mean they have to spend it. Chair Kidder agreed and said they need to put the money aside so they can get the work done. They haven't hired anyone yet; they are trying to determine how much money they have to set aside for the Academy Building and to do some cosmetic work at Whipple Hall. She thought they would need \$150,000

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to increase the Building Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund to \$150,000 for FY2016. THE MOTION PASSED. Peter Bianchi was opposed.

Mr. Parsons said he would like the Selectmen to get a committee together to work on this master plan. Ms. Hallquist asked for clarification of the Building Committee's involvement going forward, it was her understanding that the Building Committee would participate in planning for future uses of Whipple Hall, but not the Academy siding project. She pointed out that she doesn't think the Buildings Committee needs to be involved in the Academy Building siding project as that is a maintenance issue. She noted that there were missteps during the bandstand roofing project due, in part, because there were too many people involved, she felt it best to have current town staff oversee the Academy Building projects.

Bridge Deficiencies on Brookside Drive

Mr. Lee said an inspection report from DOT regarding the culverts on Brookside Drive shows the two bridges are considered deficient. Mr. Lee contacted an engineering firm to get a quote for the work to do the sites. For each site, it is \$25,000 for the engineering, \$2,000 to bid the project, and \$10,000 to oversee the construction. Mr. Lee said New Hampshire Fish & Game and DOT won't look at a project without a plan in place, and they don't generally approve in-kind replacements. He suggested that the Board consider asking voters to name the selectmen as agents to expend the bridge maintenance fund so they can start working on the engineering sooner than later. He added that if the drainage from the culverts goes over 300 acres, they will have to do a watershed survey, which he thought would be likely with this project. If they don't address this issue and the culvert caves in, they will have 12 houses not accessible

and a temporary bridge will need to be rented. His recommendation is to repair at least one site so the road won't have to be closed off completely.

Mr. Lee estimated construction costs would be about \$70,000 for each site if they were able to replace them in-kind, with their own labor and renting larger machinery. This is best case scenario and in-kind replacement may not be an option.

Potential Capital Reserve Funds, with expected balances at June 30th, that could be discontinued

The Board discussed existing Capital Reserve Funds that could be discontinued, because they are no longer needed for the purpose of the fund, if so voted by Town Meeting voters:

Intersection Improvement Fund: \$579 – Ms. Hallquist said that this fund will be used for the Elkins project and the money may not be used by June 30th so she suggested holding off on this for one more year.

Lamson Lane Fund: \$30,195

Rebuild Main Street: \$58,672

Master Plan Update: \$7,337 – Ms. Hallquist said this is something the Town will continue to have to do and will need professional help doing this so she did not see a value in discontinuing the fund.

Expendable Trust fund for Insurance: \$30,190

Copier Replacement: \$2,047

New London Wastewater Facilities Fund: \$115,209

Milfoil Fund: \$7,982 – Selectman Bianchi said this fund was put in place to mitigate milfoil infestation, should it be necessary. This fund became inactive once they started funding the lake associations. If the Town had to mitigate milfoil, the amount in the fund would be a drop in the hat. Chair Kidder agreed, noting that the fund should be discontinued.

It was determined that both the Intersection Improvement Fund and the Master Plan Update Fund should be kept. The rest of the funds could be discontinued and returned to the general fund.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to accept discontinuing funds in the amount of \$244,295.

Selectman Bianchi asked if this money was already accounted for in the revenues worksheet. Ms. Johnson said it was.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

New Business

Newport Ambulance

Ms. Hallquist said the Town of Newport has put the discontinuance of their ambulance off until June 1st. Bruce King, President of New London Hospital, has met with the town of Newport regarding their decision to end the ambulance service.

Dispatch

It was asked why Dispatch had been down a few times over the weekend. Ms. Hallquist said there were some failures due to ice but they were able to use back-up devices. Necessary repairs were made as soon as possible and there was no interruption in service.

Sewer Flows

Ms. Hallquist noted that the sewer flows to the Sunapee Wastewater Treatment plant are being monitored and they show Sunapee has higher flows than has been previously assessed. The hand-written numbers, taken from the flow meters each day, hadn't been sent to New London from Sunapee since mid-November but the New London/Sunapee office staff are working out a more consistent transfer of data. Adjusted flow percentages to assess costs for the plant (for the past several years New London has paid 65% and Sunapee 35%) are due to be changed in September 2015 based on the previous 12 months of flows. Sunapee has asked for another year to set it because they do not believe the meter readings showing such high flows for Sunapee are accurate.

Approval of Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to approve the minutes of February 17, 2015, as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Other Business

The Center for the Arts – Permission to Serve Alcohol at Whipple Hall

The Center for the Arts had requested that they be allowed to serve wine at once/month events at Whipple Hall. As requested by the Selectmen, Chiefs Lyon and Andersen reviewed the request and both are OK with this. Ms. Hallquist noted that final approval is required by the Selectmen. Selectmen Bianchi said he isn't excited about it as it could set precedent for other groups and doesn't think having alcohol on town property is a good idea.

Ms. Hallquist noted that there is a town policy in place that alcohol is not allowed on town property. The Selectmen have made exceptions for the Fire Department pay night dinner and for the Chamber night during Hospital Days. If the Selectmen don't want to allow other events to serve alcohol, they should deny the request. Selectman Rollins said she is fine with the idea. Chair Kidder said she wants organizations to be successful and felt that Center for the Arts is a wonderful organization. If the Police and Fire Chiefs don't have an issue with it, she is ok with the idea.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) and seconded (Nancy Rollins) to allow The Center for the Arts to serve alcohol once a month at Whipple Hall. THE MOTION PASSED. Peter Bianchi was opposed.

New London Police Officers on Interstate 89

Selectman Bianchi said he got two calls at different times during the weekend about New London police patrolling on Interstate 89. If these instances were the result of a request for assistance by the State Police, it was not an issue, however, the Selectmen have asked that the New London officers not patrol the interstate. Ms. Hallquist noted that Chief Andersen was not able to attend the meeting but planned to attend the next meeting to discuss this issue in more detail. In the meantime, Chief Andersen informed Ms. Hallquist that on Sunday as he was driving on I-89, he observed an erratic driver on the highway so he called dispatch and requested that a New London officer go onto the highway to stop the driver.

Ms. Hallquist noted that Chief Andersen looked into the calls for service on I-89 from 2002 to the present and found that there has been an average of 49 service calls/month on I-89. Chief Andersen agrees that the officers shouldn't be going on the interstate just to run radar. They do go to the interstate in response to an accident or if troopers ask them to be on the lookout for someone/something. When they are near the on-ramps at exits 11 and 12 and see someone en route to the highway going too fast, they will follow them onto the highway and stop them for speeding. The Board agreed that these examples were all valid reasons for the New London police to be on I-89.

Ms. Hallquist said that Chief Andersen would be at the meeting on March 16th and could answer their questions at that time.

Selectmen Notification of Employee Raises

Selectman Bianchi said he is concerned about changes that had been made in some of the salaries which weren't made note of during the budget process. Last year a 5% raise was given to an individual and 12.8% raise was given to another. His concern was if there is an increase in salary, the Selectmen should be notified of it during the year. Ms. Hallquist said Heather Wood in dispatching was promoted as the Communications Administrator which is why she received a raise. Ms. Hallquist explained that changes in wages have been made in the past on the request of a department head with the approval of the Town Administrator. Instances include a change in responsibilities as in the case of the Communications Administrator position that the Selectmen approved, or upon the successful completion of a probationary period. The pay change form that has been used by the town for several years does not require approval or signature of the Selectmen. She noted that if the Selectmen would prefer to discuss pay changes with department heads directly, they could require them to attend a selectmen's meeting and go into non-public session.

Selectman Bianchi thinks if someone gets a raise in the middle of the year, the Selectmen should know about it. Ms. Hallquist noted that currently offer letters to new employees are placed into the selectmen's reading file; these letters include the wage rate. If the Selectmen want to be involved during the hiring phase and setting of wages, then meeting in nonpublic session would be the way to go. Ms. Hallquist noted that generally the town administrator and department heads are delegated to do this, however, the Selectmen can be involved as much as the Board wants to.

Chair Kidder said she thinks Ms. Hallquist is doing a good job with the department heads and keeping track of salaries. She didn't think they are doing anything inappropriate or that the Board should consider a change in how these issues are handled. Selectman Rollins concurred.

Upcoming Meetings & Special Events

Next Selectmen's Meeting – Monday, March 16th – 6:00 PM. Will include a public hearing – Acceptance of Mary D. Haddad Trust
Planning Board – Tuesday, March 3rd – 7:00 PM
Budget Committee – Wednesday, March 4th – 7:00 PM
Energy Committee – Wednesday, March 4th – 7:00 PM – Colby-Sawyer – Ivey #201
School Elections – Tuesday, March 10th Whipple Memorial Town Hall – 8:00AM – 7:00PM

Application for Building Permit

- Mere Bluff LLC, 37 Boulder Point (115-003-000) Demo existing 3-bedroom home and construct new 3-bedroom home – APPROVED
- Deb & Craig Langner, 1299 Route 103A (128-007-000) Install 6.0kw rooftop solar array – APPROVED
- Leigh & Sean Bears, 94 Quail Run (108-011-000) Install 7.56kw rooftop solar array - APPROVED

Application for Use of Whipple Hall

- Mad Athlete/Emerald Necklace – August 20, 2015 7am – 7pm. Registration and check-in point. APPROVED

Sign Permit Applications:

- Yaya's Memory Lane Antique Furniture & Gifts – 428 Main Street – APPROVED
- New London Historical Society – Chamber of Commerce info booth – 328 Main Street - APPROVED

Other Items to be Signed:

- Intent to Cut – 371 Mountain Road (112-005-000)

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:39pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London