



TOWN OF
NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
September 3, 2013

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Jason Lyon, Fire Chief
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
Leigh Bosse, *The Messenger*
Gayle Hedrington, WNTK Radio
Norm Bernaiche, Chief Assessor
Kris McAllister, Assessor
Doug Homan, Budget Committee
Gena Edmunds, New London resident

The Chair called the meeting to order at 8:00AM and opened the Public Informational Hearing on the Pleasant Lake Drawdown.

Pleasant Lake Drawdown Public Informational Hearing

Ms. Hallquist explained that the Town will open the Pleasant Lake dam gate on Monday September 16th to allow the lake to drain as low as possible (expected to be a little over 4 vertical feet). The lake must be lowered to allow the Town to complete repairs to the face of the dam: filling of cracks. This work is being done to comply with requirements contained within the Letter of Deficiency issued by the State of NH Dam Bureau. Ms. Hallquist noted that depending on the amount of rain fall, it is hoped that the lake will be low enough by the end of September, allowing work to be done during the first weeks of October. If there is a lot of rain during the period, it may take longer for the lake to drain to an acceptable level to commence work. She noted that during this time, the Town will also make repairs to the boat launch. Once the planned work is completed, the dam gate will be set to winter level and the lake allowed to re-fill. It is anticipated that this will occur sometime in mid-late October, again, depending on rainfall. Ms. Hallquist noted that notices of the planned drawdown were sent to various state agencies, the Town of Wilmot, and other interested organizations, including the Pleasant Lake Protective Association. E-mails from Kittie Wilson including this information have been very helpful in getting the word out for the past several months.

There were no questions or comments from those present so the public hearing was concluded.

Religious, Educational and Charitable Tax Exemption Requests

Norm Bernaiche, Chief Assessor, met with the Board to discuss his recommendations for religious, educational and charitable property tax exemption applications. This is a yearly process and he noted that there are no significant changes this year and he recommended granting the applications as presented. The Board agreed.

Winter Road Maintenance –establishing low sand roads

Richard Lee, DPW Director, met with the Board to request that they consider designating some roads as low sand roads for winter maintenance. He explained that he has gotten several complaints over the years from residents of some roads that too much sand is applied to the roads. The roads in question are: Fieldstone Lane, Forest Acres Road, Tracy Road and Stoney Brook Road from 103A to the Newbury town line. Mr. Lee noted that he would first have to prepare guidelines for when and how much sand would be applied, and then the Board would need to hold a public hearing to get input from citizens. The Board agreed to consider this once Mr. Lee could prepare the guidelines.

Alternate Member for the Conservation Commission

Chair Helm noted that Conservation Commission Chair Bob Brown has requested that an additional alternate member be appointed to the Commission. This will bring the total number of alternates to three. Chair Helm noted that the Conservation Commission does a tremendous job for the town and she felt that having another person on the Commission is a good idea. The Board agreed. It was noted that John Clough is currently on the list for appointment to the next opening.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to appoint John Clough as an alternate member of the CONSERVATION COMMISSION. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The process of hiring a permanent police chief

Ms. Hallquist presented her recommendation on the process to be followed for the search for a permanent police chief. She explained that her recommendation is to conduct the process in three phases: Phase 1: a committee comprised of people experienced in law enforcement and the Town Administrator will screen all of the applications that are received. The best of the candidates will be interviewed by that committee. The successful candidates after that phase will be sent to the second phase; Phase 2: a committee of citizens, as was employed for the Town Administrator search two years ago, will conduct interviews of the candidates recommended by the first committee, and will make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen; Phase 3: the Board of Selectmen will consider the recommendations of the citizens committee and conduct final interviews and make a decision on who to hire. Ms. Hallquist concluded by noting that this process could take up to five months but she felt that spending the time was well worth it to ensure that the best candidate is selected.

The Board discussed whether they would include a requirement that the successful candidate live a certain distance from town to ensure a timely response in the event of an emergency. The town

does not currently have a residency requirement for department heads. Mr. Bianchi thought they should specify this in the ad, perhaps saying that the candidate must live within a certain number of miles from the town. Ms. Kidder suggested that this would cut down on the number of people who would apply. A perfectly good candidate may be from out of town and may be willing to move closer to town if selected. It was determined that the ad would include a statement that distance would be a consideration, but no specific number of miles would be included.

Mr. Homan noted his concern with the plan to have the first committee essentially choosing the next police chief as they will choose the ones to be interviewed. He noted that these people will be strangers to the Town. Ms. Hallquist stressed that she would also be involved in the first round of this process and that if there was a candidate that she felt should, or should not, be interviewed, that information would be passed on to the Selectmen. Ms. Hallquist explained that in her opinion, the first phase should be conducted by people with expertise in law enforcement as they will know which candidates have the technical skills to be a successful police chief. Her presence on the committee will be to represent the interests of the town from a position of which candidate would make a good fit in the community.

Chair Helm observed that law enforcement personnel have a better ability to identify quality candidates as they are trained in this field. The details that must be considered are numerous. She hoped to utilize this team-approached decision to choose the best person for the job.

Mr. Homan said what they are looking for is honesty, integrity and a community-oriented police chief. They need someone who is happy to be committed to the Town of New London for a long period of time. He thought the more community input, the better and that the community committee they are setting up should be involved from the beginning. Ms. Hallquist disagreed with Mr. Homan's last notion. Mr. Homan didn't see the position of a police chief as anything different than a manager. Ms. Hallquist disagreed, pointing out that in addition to being a manager, a police chief must have specific law enforcement knowledge and skills. She noted that non-law enforcement people would not have the expertise needed to evaluate the level of technical skill the candidate possessed. She concluded that it is critical to ensure that the people interviewed by the citizens committee are technically qualified first, and then the committee can concentrate on whether the person would be a good fit for the community.

Chair Helm wondered how they could get broader input from the community. She thought perhaps the newspaper or the list-serve could be used to gather citizens' input regarding what they want from a new chief. Ms. Hallquist said people have already contacted her asking about when a new chief would be hired and informing her of what they'd like to see as far as personal qualities. Chair Helm agreed that the same kind of calls have been received by all three selectmen. Mr. Bianchi suggested putting it out there that the Select Board encourages the townspeople to share their input on this issue with them.

Mr. Bianchi thought the Select Board should have some input on the committee members and what they expect them to do. What would be their ideal expectations from each committee? Chair Helm suggested between now and when she leaves for vacation, they each try to come up with their thoughts on their charge and give them to Ms. Hallquist. Ms. Hallquist could then create a profile for the first committee and the citizens committee.

Chair Helm wondered how they should proceed with discussing their nominations for the citizens committee. The Board agreed that each Selectman would appoint two members and then two members would be voted on by the entire Board, thus there will be eight members on the citizens committee.

Jay Lyon, Fire Chief, said if the Selectmen are concerned about attracting people who live outside the area, they could mention in the ad that they would have a time limit on how long before they would have to move into the area. Chair Helm said that she would rather not put this into the ad as it would deter people from applying who may be a good fit, just because of their location. Mr. Bianchi suggested the ad include something to say that a successful candidate would be in close proximity to the town but that they should not specify mileage or minutes from the town.

Mr. Lee suggested including that "a possible area residency requirement may be needed." That way they won't get the best candidate to a high round of interviews but then learn that they won't move to be closer. A lot of time would be wasted if nothing is mentioned about this possible requirement up front.

Mr. Homan said the new chief would be there for a long time. He wondered if they had thought of hiring an officer in charge as opposed to a chief. This would allow for the community to get comfortable with the person and then after a year or two of probation, offer him/her the position. Mr. Bianchi had no issues with that approach if it would serve the town better however he wasn't sure if it would help or hinder the process. Chair Helm said they haven't looked into this however she didn't think it was a good idea. She noted that the Board has given the town some time to settle down and she felt that people are ready to return to normalcy and have a permanent police chief. She would not support Mr. Homan's suggestion of hiring an officer in charge but would like to move forward instead of looking back. Chair Helm felt that it was a great town they lived in which has been served well by its employees.

Town Administrator's Report

1941 Building Lease

Ms. Hallquist said she met with Jerry Frew (District Superintendent) about the lease of the 1941 building. He reminded her that parking needed to be a part of the plan. She will go to the next committee meeting (that Thursday) to remind them about this necessity. They will also need another entrance from Main Street, as they can't use the Pleasant Street entrance.

Committee Reports

Planning Board

Mr. Bianchi said the Planning Board met the previous week. There was a proposed public hearing by Colby-Sawyer College to install two field events onto Mercer Field. One is the javelin throw, which would have the javelins heading towards Seamans Road. There were a couple of fast-track applications for change in use. Both were approved. There was a conceptual discussion of the site across the street from Country Houses where the old Shepherd barn used to be. Much discussion ensued of tree-cutting issues and requests. They were all approved for cutting, but not

unanimously. They are finding more ambiguity in the Town's regulations about tree cutting. The CIP will begin with a committee after the Budget Committee gets started.

Ms. Kidder asked if access was discussed to the fast-track application for John Wilson's building (dentist's office). Mr. Bianchi said it was not discussed. There was discussion of exit sign upgrades and an egress that needed to be added. They would have a decrease in use for the building and parking. Ms. Kidder noted that to access parking, they must cross Kidder property and wondered if this aspect had been mentioned. Mr. Bianchi said that it wasn't. Ms. Kidder thought that this may have been one agenda item that the abutters should have been notified on, as access can't be made without property crossing. Mr. Bianchi said that as it was treated as a fast-track application, abutters weren't notified.

Chair Helm wondered if the Planning Board was using fast-track too much instead of using site plan review. It was noted that they would use less parking, but the access to the parking was never brought up. Mr. Bianchi said that site plan review is a good chance to allow the town to go back into the building to see if things had been changed or to make sure everything is up to current regulations. Unless they have a building inspector, there is no other vehicle to allow for this review. He said a letter has been sent to Mr. Mayer (Town Counsel) on whether or not the fast-track method of allowing site plans applications to be approved without a full Site Plan Review is legal or recommended.

Recreation

Ms. Kidder said that Recreation would meet later that evening but she wanted to thank Mr. Lee for installing the packed gravel walkway between the parking lot at Elkins and the beach. She noted that the beaches were not closed but said there are no lifeguards on duty.

Approval of Minutes

August 19, 2013

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the minutes as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Upcoming Meetings

September 6, 2013 – Community Advisory Committee at 7:30am

September 10, 2013 – Planning Board at 7:00pm

September 16, 2013 – Board of Selectmen at 6:00pm

September 24, 2013 – Planning Board at 7:00pm

September 30, 2013 – Board of Selectmen at 8:00am

Ms. Kidder didn't think any further discussion of the police chief position should ensue without the presence of Chair Helm. The next meeting Chair Helm would be present was September 30th. The want ads will be placed as soon as the ad is finalized.

Other

Sidewalks Needed

Mr. Lee informed the Board that the Planning Board included a condition when it approved the Colby-Sawyer College Ware Center expansion that the issue of sidewalks on Seamans Road would need to be addressed. He recently met with engineers, Doug Atkins, Planning & Zoning Administrator Lucy St. John, Fire Chief Lyon and Acting Police Chief Andersen, to talk about the safety of people walking on Seamans Road and into the entrance of the new fields. There is more and more foot traffic on Seamans Road due to college activity. It was thought that there would probably be two phases of sidewalk construction: Gould Road to the parking lot, and from the parking lot to the fields. There was a question as to who would pay for the sidewalks; the College or the Town, or a combination of both. Mr. Lee thought perhaps they could paint some lines on the road to offer a safer place to walk on the street. He thought this was something to think about and wanted the Selectmen to know that this discussion was coming up. Mr. Lee suggested that the students needed to be educated about using the crosswalks and not crossing wherever they wish. The college and Mr. Lee are working on getting estimates for this work.

Chief Lyon said that Mr. Atkins wanted to make sure the Selectmen were notified of this movement. He was concerned about who would pay for the sidewalks as well as the timing of the installation of them. They have gates up between Danforth and Rook dorms now to limit traffic to college and emergency vehicles only and are trying to make it more of a walking campus with parking on the outskirts.

Ms. Kidder wondered if a plan from the college included this kind of foot traffic. The college decided to use the buildings on Cottage Lane so perhaps they anticipated some increase in foot traffic and a method to deal with it. Chair Helm said she didn't believe this was part of the proposal when they talked about the houses on Cottage Lane. Ms. Kidder said she would like to see their plan for the use of the property. They are using homes on Seamans and Gould Roads and must have thought about what their future holds. It was noted that the buildings the college owns on Seamans and Gould Roads are seen as off-campus housing and are not considered to be a part of the college's plan or responsibility to provide sidewalks.

Mr. Bianchi said that at the last Planning Board meeting, the college mentioned that their Master Plan was complete and that they would come to the Planning Board to present it when the Planning Board's schedule would allow.

Mr. Lee said they already have the paint and only needed to get out there to paint the lines. Chair Helm said that she didn't know that this would take care of the problem, but felt it was worth a try. Mr. Lee said that the college realizes they will have to look at off-site infrastructure (sidewalks, crosswalks) and that they'll need to integrate that into their master plan. The college is aware that the more expansion they create, the more responsibility they will have to assume to address the issues of pedestrian traffic they are promoting.

Mr. Lee wondered if the Selectmen would be OK with him painting a white line on the side of the street and a crosswalk in the interim to see if it would work before they go through the expense of putting in sidewalks. It was the consensus of the Select Board to give Mr. Lee permission to do this painting of lines and crosswalks on Seamans Road. Mr. Bianchi said that the college is creeping outside of the IR zone and the Town should be paying attention to this.

Lamson Lane Work

Mr. Lee said he has two contractors looking at the work to be done at Lamson Lane. He is hoping to get the work done this fall.

Brush

Mr. Lee said that brush continues to be a sticking point with residents. There is a company called "Dirt Doctor" who will grind and take the brush away for \$3,500/day and can do 1,500 yards/day. He noted that he included \$4,000 in his budget this year for grinding brush. Mr. Lee questioned if they should now start accepting brush of all kinds and in November have the person come in to grind and see how it works out and estimate how many times they'd need to have him come the following year. Mr. Lee noted that it is his understanding that the quarantine for the Emerald Ash Beetle is not in force from October through April so the town could resume bringing brush to Springfield during that time period. Chair Helm thought if this was going to be an ongoing challenge, they should be proactive and think about putting grinding into the budget.

Mr. Lee said that grinding seems to be the way to go as burning brush creates many more issues that the town would have to deal with such as: permitting, smoke, personnel to tend the fire, need for water supply and limitations on numbers of days the town could burn. He noted that the town would have to have a plan for brush disposal between April and October when the quarantine will not allow the town to transport the brush. Chair Helm said that they need to continue to educate the citizens about why they can't accept brush at this time. Mr. Lee said that overall, people have been very good about it. It does need to be addressed as the problem won't be going away.

Patriot Day Events

Chief Lyon said there was a schedule of events for Patriot Day - September 11th. Last year the 5th grade, led by music teacher Nicole Densmore, did a great job with the program at the Fire Station and he expected a similar performance this year. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend on Wednesday, September 11th at 11:00am. Sirens will sound twice that morning, coinciding with the times that the planes hit each tower (8:46am and 9:03am).

**IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(b), the hiring of a public employee.
Roll call vote: Helm: YES, Bianchi: YES, Kidder: YES**

The Board entered nonpublic session at 10:05am.

**IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to exit non-public session.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Board re-entered the public meeting at 10:21am.

Application for Building Permit:

- Paul & Linda Messer, 113 Seamans Road (Map & Lot 085-023-000) replace and repair porch and posts – Permit #13-092 – Approved.
- Troy & Nicole Densmore, 32 Pipers Glen (Map & Lot 074-035-000) build shed w/overhang – Permit #13-093 – Approved.
- Dale & Jeanne Conly, 1801 Little Sunapee Road (Map & Lot 043-021-000) re-side bath house - Permit #13-094 – Approved.
- Kevin Butler, 324 Barrett Road (Map & Lot 095-012-000) re-roof house – Permit #13-095 – Approved.
- Nancy Snow, 79 Graystone Circle (Map & Lot 046-027-000) install shed – Permit #13-089 – Approved.
- Jeffrey Wheeler, 275 Route 103A (Map & Lot 080-012-000) interior renovations – Permit #13-096 – Approved.
- Glen & Kristine Lohmann, 90 Oxbow Road (Map & Lot 121-027-000) add farmer's porch – Permit #13-097 – Approved.

Application to use Town Common:

- NL Recreation – flag football – Monday & Friday – 3-4PM – 9/6 through 10/14 – approved.

Application for Sign Permit:

- BSA – Join Cub Scouts signs to be placed at information booth, elementary school, First Baptist Church & Kearsarge Pres. Church – for one week – Approved.

Other Items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher
- Charitable, Educational & Religious Tax Exemption Applications for 2013 Tax Year – approved.
- Tax abatement – A. Rylander, in the amount of \$134.10 – timber harvest was lower quality

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to adjourn the meeting.

THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:40am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London