



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES April 6, 2012

PRESENT:

Mark Kaplan, Chair, Board of Selectmen
Tina Helm, Selectman
Peter Bianchi, Selectman
Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Chad Denning, Recreation Director
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer
Linda Jackman, Administrator's Assistant
Dave Seastrand, Police Chief
Jason Lyon, Fire Chief
Richard Lee, Public Works Director
New London resident: Janet Kidder

Chair Kaplan called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Recommendations for warrant articles

Ms. Hallquist reviewed a list of proposed individual warrant articles that have been discussed during the budget process, both expenditures and payments into the capital reserve fund. She suggested that the Board decide what recommendations they will put on each so they can send it to the Budget Committee for their review at the Public Hearing. The Budget Committee will then make their recommendations. The Board is free to go along with the changes suggested by the Budget Committee or they may put their own numbers forward. Ms. Hallquist noted that Chad Denning has presented a revised cost break-out for the Bucklin Beach bath house upgrade, as requested at the last Budget Committee meeting.

Chair Kaplan asked how the Recreation Department felt about the amount to be spent on the bath house, which was \$36,160. Mr. Denning said that it wasn't what he originally wanted, but he understands where the Budget Committee is coming from. They see it as a step-by-step process and they are focusing on the most important things: Bringing it up to ADA compliance, replacing the windows and lead paint, replacing the shingles and installing low-flow fixtures. He felt this was a good first step. The other adjustments he had recommended earlier were cosmetic. He noted that Brian Carey spent a lot of time on this project for free. Mr. Denning's recommendation is to say to spend no more than \$40,000 and then go out to bid on it. He felt that would give them some "wiggle room." Mr. Bianchi said that he felt the \$36,160 was a fine figure and they could use that number to put out the bid.

Ms. Helm knew that Mr. Denning has spent a lot of time with Mr. Wheeler on this and felt it was a compromise. She was OK with the amount. Mr. Bianchi suggested writing a letter to Mr. Carey, thanking him for doing this good work and that they would be going out to bid for the project. Ms. Helm felt such a letter should come from the Selectmen. Ms. Hallquist said that she would write a letter and that Chair Kaplan could sign it.

**IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to authorize Mark Kaplan to sign a thank-you letter to Mr. Brian Carey, on behalf of the Board of Selectmen for the work he has done on the Bucklin Beach bath house upgrade project.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chair Kaplan asked about the difference in the sidewalk maintenance for \$9,000 and the sidewalk fund that the Budget Committee wants to delete. Ms. Hallquist said the first one is money that Mr. Lee plans to spend in FY 2012. It was in the operating budget previously. Ms. Johnson said that next year it will come out of the transportation improvement fund. It is just a difference in how they will fund it. It is for the area along Main Street that needs to be fixed. Mr. Lee said they are concentrating on Seaman's Road to the Cleveland's, and will do it in \$9,000 increments. Mr. Bianchi thought it should be said that the \$9,000 will not fix the entire sidewalk but just a portion of it. The \$20,000 the Budget Committee had removed was for the sidewalk capital reserve fund as they suggested a payment was not necessary as the Elkins project that wasn't going forward at this time.

Mr. Bianchi asked if they really needed the portable traffic lights that are requested. Mr. Lee said that if he has one less person, he won't get anything done because they need to provide traffic assistance while working on projects. Sometimes he has to use two flaggers when working on busy roads, the portable traffic lights will alleviate the need to have two employees working on traffic control. Chair Kaplan felt this was a worthy expenditure and it would save them money in the long run.

Ms. Helm asked what the Transfer Station Equipment Maintenance fund was. Ms. Hallquist said that it was a fund established in 2006 that was non-lapsing for five years. The work was not done, and the fund lapsed at the end of 2010. Mr. Lee has indicated that he needs to do the work and has asked that the non-lapsing fund be re-established. Ms. Hallquist said that the Budget Committee had not seen this yet. Chair Kaplan said he didn't like taking money out of surplus because he felt it was intended to reduce the tax rate. He asked Mr. Lee if he had any wiggle room in his budget where he could find the \$5,000 for the tank replacement. Mr. Lee said he wasn't sure that he did.

Mr. Bianchi asked if they could re-activate the account. Ms. Hallquist said that is what they'd like to do but they would actually need to vote to create it again. Mr. Bianchi thought there should be a warrant article to create a new, non-lapsing fund without mentioning a funding source. The entire Board of Selectmen agreed on this idea.

**IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to recommend the purposes listed in the amount of \$1,159,044.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The Board discussed the capital improvement plan for the Recreation Department. Ms. Helm noted that believed strongly in setting money aside and planning, but felt that since less was being taken out to refurbish the bath house, they should withhold the 7,500 for a year. Chair Kaplan disagreed and felt that Mr. Denning has compromised and the \$7,500 should be funded. He thought they should put money away still regardless, as that is what the fund is intended for. Mr. Bianchi said, in principal, he agreed with him. But by the end of 2014, the balance of the fund was projected to be \$45,000. Even if they don't put any into it this year, the fund will be \$72,000. That is much higher than they had anticipated. He didn't think they should stop contributing forever, but just for this year.

Ms. Helm said that just because she was voting this way this year, doesn't necessarily mean that she won't vote differently in another year. Each year they have to assess the total package.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to not fund \$7,500 to the recreation capital improvement facilities account this year. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED. Peter Bianchi: Yes, Tina Helm: Yes, Mark Kaplan: No

Ms. Helm wondered what the Bridge Maintenance Fund was for. Mr. Lee said that they have eight bridges in town and at some point they will need to repair them which is always an expensive job. Sometimes they can get help from the State, but this is no guarantee. Mr. Bianchi said that the account has over \$113,000 in it currently.

Mr. Bianchi said he was not against a new police cruiser but he was against putting the same amount in every year and taking it out every year. They used to present a warrant article at Town Meeting to raise funds for a new cruiser, when needed. Chair Kaplan said this was a method of making sure the Police Department's vehicles are kept up to date. In the past the vehicles they had were in need of replacement and they did not set funds aside and ended up paying high costs for vehicle maintenance.

Chief Seastrand said that reason they first went to the CIP was that any purchases that were \$10,000 or more needed to be put into the CIP. The Budget Committee also wanted to use the CIP as a plan to know when vehicles were to be purchased and when to expect those funds to come due.

Chair Kaplan said that they are not upgrading and paving the gravel roads. Mr. Bianchi said the fund currently has about \$59,000 in it. Mr. Lee thought they should wait another couple of years to get more funding into the program before paving any road, as the price for asphalt and tar are going up as the price of gas does. They won't be able to pave a new road until they have enough funds. Ms. Helm was in favor of funding the account with \$25,000 this year to keep the program moving even if it is slower than they had once planned. Chair Kaplan agreed with Ms. Helm.

Ms. Helm recalled that Peter Stanley found the \$10,000 the Budget Committee suggested at the last meeting for GIS Updates to be acceptable. The Board agreed to remove \$15,000 from this account.

Chair Kaplan said the Budget Committee suggested removing \$20,000 in the sidewalks fund which should not impact anything. Mr. Bianchi and Ms. Helm agreed with this idea, the amount was removed from their budget.

IT WAS MOVED (Tina Helm) AND SECONDED (Peter Bianchi) to put \$470,500 into the capital reserve funds as amended on the budget sheet as of April 6, 2012. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Ms. Hallquist suggested scheduling a meeting after the Budget Hearing so that the Warrant can be signed by the Selectmen. The Board tentatively set Tuesday, April 10th at 4:00pm to sign the Warrant if the Budget Committee completes its work on the Budget during the public hearing on the budget.

Other Business

Chief Seastrand said as a result of going through the budget process, he has been asked by the Budget Committee to analyze gas prices. He said they could get gas from the State pumps at the bulk rate. They would need to get gas at the Sunapee/Newport town line. Chief Seastrand noted that he is aware that having the cruisers out of town to get gas may not be the preferred way to operate so he wanted to get the Board's thoughts on this. He noted that could get \$3.14/gallon. Any time the gas prices go above \$3.59, they should get gas in Sunapee to take advantage of the State rate. He said that this would enable them to get gas at any state shed that offers gas from the State. It is 16 miles, round trip, to the Sunapee gas shed.

Mr. Bianchi felt that as long as they weren't committed to getting all their gas there, he thought it was a good idea. Chief Seastrand said that the State doesn't mandate when or how often they will take advantage of the bulk rate. It was noted that the Park 'n Go is offering the Town a deal at \$.03 above cost and that they wouldn't want to lose this deal with this business as it was convenient. Ms. Johnson said that Park 'n Go provides the town with a printout of gallons and the tax paid, and then Ms. Johnson prepares the tax refund paperwork so the Town gets the tax refunded.

There was discussion about the town getting their own fuel pumps for the town vehicles. Chief Lyon said that in emergency situations when there are extended power outages, it would be helpful to have a fuel source other than the area businesses which may not have power.

Use of Whipple Hall

Ms. Jackman said that Northeast Shakespeare Play Ensemble have rented Whipple Hall for 20 days in May. They have used the conference rooms in the past and have been charged \$300. They are not charged for the main hall. They asked if they could use the conference rooms again. She emailed Ms. Levine (previous Town Administrator) to see what they had been charged. She responded that it was \$300 and that a key was given to them for the conference rooms only. The use of the hall was approved in November, 2011. The hall would be 9am – 9pm. They productions will be at Colby-Sawyer and the hall is only being used for practicing and memorizing lines. Ms. Jackman said that the group is flexible and seems willing to work around things that may come up at the Hall.

Ms. Jackman said this group and the usage had already been approved at this fee for these days. The new fees that Mr. Bianchi explained to her were not in effect yet. Ms. Helm agreed and didn't feel they could legitimately charge them for the use of the hall. However, in the future she feels that if they want a waiver on any of the fees they need to come to the Board of Selectmen directly. Also, this will be the last time that they will not charge for the use of the large hall.

Ms. Jackman said that the group assumed they would be able to use the two conference rooms, but understood if they wouldn't be allowed to. Ms. Helm said that this was a perfect example of how murky the process of renting this facility out really is. They need to discuss what they will charge people for the use of the conference rooms.

Mr. Bianchi didn't feel that just because they rented the facility to this group last year for \$300, doesn't mean they have to do it again this year. He calculated the fee to be just \$15/day for the use of the entire hall and the two conference rooms, which was cheap.

It was decided that going forward, the new rates would apply, but that this year they could rent the facility for the same amount (\$300).

Mr. Bianchi wondered if the Shakespeare Ensemble was a non-profit or a for-profit organization. He also wondered if it was a town-based organization. Ms. Helm believed they were a non-profit. Ms. Helm thanked Ms. Jackman for bringing this to their attention. Mr. Bianchi said he would like to know for sure, one way or another.

It was noted by a meeting attendee that it would be bad will on the Town's part to charge the group a higher rate as it is now April and they have already made their plans. Ms. Kidder observed that at this late date it would be hard for the group to make other arrangements and suggested that allowing the use again this year would be appropriate. Ms. Helm agreed and said that they are trying to make a contribution to the community.

The Barn Players approached Mr. Jackman the other day and gave her a list of times they want to use Whipple Hall for practice. They are not able to use Colby-Sawyer because of the Gordon Research program and the dining hall being re-done. The Outing Club is also not available due to other programs.

In the past the Barn Players have used Whipple Hall (for as many as 70 days) and have only ever been charged \$50 and had their deposit returned except for one year. She explained to the Barn Player representative that the fee structure was changing. Ms. Helm said that Mr. DeMille came to talk with her and she explained the change that is coming regarding the facility and rental fees. She suggested he come to the Board of Selectmen with their request and they would move from there. She didn't envision a complete waiver but perhaps if an organization intends to use it for an extended period of time they may be able to come to a compromise on a total collective fee. She did say that they needed to come with them for a formal presentation. Until this is done, she recommended that they look at this as a new request and was a clean slate with regards to the fee structure.

Ms. Jackman felt that this was abuse of Whipple Hall. There were kids from all over the country and they leave a mess. They have food and drink in there and are not supposed to.

Mr. Denning said that when the Recreation Department takes kids to the Barn Playhouse in the summer, they have to pay for their tickets. They have asked if the ticket fees can be waived but they tell them they cannot because they have to pay for things. He felt that what goes around comes around. It wasn't fair to use the hall for free when they won't give the town a break on things like tickets for the summer campers.

Ms. Helm said that Mr. DeMille said he would come speak with the Board of Selectmen about this. She added that a couple of years ago they had been made aware of the fact that the Barn Playhouse had not left the facility in good shape. Chief Seastrand said that they park in handicapped spots and didn't return the keys on time. Ms. Jackman said last year they were better because she would stop in and check on them from time to time. Ms. Helm felt this was how she and Mr. Denning could be more proactive with the monitoring of the facility. She thought they should wait until hearing from Mr. DeMille before making their decision.

Mr. Bianchi thought they should re-consider letting long-time renters make use of the facility as it could displace other organizations such as the Garden Club or the Boy Scouts.

Ms. Helm said that one reason they like to be there is because they can store their scenery and props. She didn't think they could resolve the issue that morning. They should give the Barn a week to come in and talk with the Selectmen about their request.

Mr. Denning said that they shouldn't make a reservation final on their calendar until they have received payment for it.

Ms. Helm said she spoke with Bud Dick who is on the SKIT board. They are planning to come to the Board of Selectmen to discuss the possibility of contributing towards purchasing darkening shades for the windows. The room could then have a more extended use time.

Pleasant Street Sidewalk Curbing Bid

Mr. Lee said that they opened up the bidding process for the curbing on Pleasant Street by posting it in the paper and sending it to four companies. One company responded out of the four, which was Classic Curb. The estimate came in lower than he expected.

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to accept the bid from Classic Curb to do the curbing for Pleasant Street. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Application for Building Permits:

- John & Monique Jevne, 45 Hilltop Place (Map & Lot 144-001-045) kitchen remodel – Permit #12-024 – Approved.
- James & Judith Moore, 348 Shaker Street (Map & Lot 111-024-000) bathroom remodel – Permit #12-025 – Approved.
- Westwind Trust, Amy Johnson Trustee, 596 Lake Shore Drive (Map & Lot 050-006-000) replace part of foundation & build retaining wall – Permit #12-026 – Approved.

Application for Permanent Sign Permit:

- New London Realty LLC, 259 Main St. (Map & Lot 084-068-000) changing wording on sign – Approved.

Application for use of Whipple Memorial Town Hall:

- League of Woman’s Voters – Candidates night, May 1, 2012 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM – Approved.

Other Items to be signed:

- Disbursement voucher
- 2 Elderly exemptions
- Warrant Yield Tax Levy – in the amount of \$527.92 (Map & Lot 128-010-000)

IT WAS MOVED (Peter Bianchi) AND SECONDED (Tina Helm) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 10:48am.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary
Town of New London