



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES May 7, 2016

PRESENT:

G. William Helm, Jr., Chair
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
Janet Kidder, Selectman

ALSO PRESENT:

John Cannon, Peter Hogleund, Celeste Cook, Tracey MacKenna, Paul Lazdowski, Rose Bernard, Don Sheffield, Renate Kannler, Bruce Hudson, Rob Prohl, Maureen Prohl, Hank Otto, Joe Cardillo, Kate Turcotte, Paul Linehan, Tim McMurrich

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bill Helm at 7:30 a.m.

Chair Helm introduced and welcomed new members to the committee. He gave a summary of recent projects including the proposed new voting places and the newly approved L.E.D. street lighting in town. He added the renovation/painting projects at the Academy Building and the Mary D. Haddad Memorial Bandstand should be finished by the end of the month. The temporary gravel parking area that had been created to accommodate construction traffic is to remain and the new GIS mapping project is well under way and it is expected to take two years to map the entire town.

Selectman Rollins addressed a handout of proposed projects to be considered for FY2018 that will be discussed with the budget committee.

- The Pleasant Lake Dam – Selectman Rollins stated an engineering analysis and report from Dubois & King, Inc. will give a firmer dollar amount than the estimated cost of \$500,000 provided to the Town several years ago.
- Whipple Hall – These repairs are based on time frames from a report by Dennis Mires, P.A. The first amount of \$165,000 represent repairs that need to be done immediately and the second amount of \$410,000 would be done over 3 to 5 years. Selectman Rollins stressed these repairs have nothing to do with any anticipated change of use but this is just to make sure it is maintained as a viable building. Currently there is water leaking in the Harold W. Buker Municipal Building (the Police and Dispatching portion) resulting from frozen pipes and bad gutters. There is very expensive dispatching equipment in the affected areas that needs to be protected.
- Sewer Lagoons – It is hoped that 1 of the 3 sewer lagoons will be closed this year. The other 2 lagoons will be phased in after that with an anticipated cost of \$150,000.
- Brookside Drive – One of the two culverts is being done this year, the second is in the budget for next year for an anticipated cost of \$200,000.
- Academy Building finishing work – This is an old building that was acquired for \$1 and a handshake but since it is 100 years old it has required a lot of work. After the installation of

the new windows and other updates there is a need for additional insulation in the attic and a new roof for an anticipated cost of \$278,000.

- Paving of gravel roads – The cost is anticipated to be \$682,000 and there is a schedule of paving for gravel roads and these are roads that Richard Lee feels are necessary for safety issues. Selectman Rollins added that it is expensive to maintain gravel roads.

Chair Helm pointed out that if the Academy Building roof and insulation is done, the total capital expenditure is \$2,385,000 (the \$92,000 listed for insulation only should be deducted from the list). He suggested looking at a long term bond for these projects as the current interest rates are very low.

Rob Prohl stated a need to prioritize the projects as this is a lot of money. How much of an increase to the tax rate would be reasonable over the years? This interest cost would have to figure into the budget planning. Mr. Prohl would like a consistent path for increase in taxes and not have tax rates that spike occasionally over the years. Mr. Prohl stated we need to hear from residents as to what their priorities are since we will not be able to do all these projects.

Maureen Prohl wondered why the roof of the Academy Building had not been done first and wanted to know what was wrong with it. The roof is not an immediate problem but will have to be done in the next 5 to 10 years and that is why there is two estimates, one for insulation only and another for insulation and a new roof. Chair Helm explained the scenario is more than just insulation in that there are mechanicals in the attic that needed to be encapsulated and taken into consideration.

Selectman Rollins explained that no one seems to know when the current roof was installed and given the life expectancy of a roof; it seemed prudent to budget for a new roof at this time.

Bruce Hudson asked for clarification that the air exchanger was part of the recent project renovations but the encapsulation of these was not taken into consideration.

When Chair Helm asked for prioritization, Rob Prohl stated the Whipple Hall project needed to be finished and the life-safety issues need to be addressed first. This building is used constantly.

Members wanted to know when the Whipple Hall addition was done but no one seemed to know. It was suggested that this was in the 1980's.

Hank Otto asked about discussions with the school board concerning the 1941 Building. Chair Helm gave some background and said currently Mark Kaplan and Doug Lyon are in communication with the School Board to acquire the 1941 Building for the town. Mr. Lyon and Mr. Kaplan continue to work towards a plan to use the building, including the center part of the building, which houses the old cafeteria. The school board has plans to renovate the library and a few classrooms for office space. The school board has decided they would like to tear the 1941 Building down this summer as the funds may have been encumbered and there is fear this money may be lost. This information is in the minutes of the recent school board.

Celeste Cook stated the town has been going around this issue for years and the time has come to address this. She wanted to know if money has been reserved for this to which the reply was money has been put aside for the sewer lagoons, the culvert and the Pleasant Lake Dam project along with

the bond that was recently voted on. Ms. Cook stated the town has a history of waiting too long on projects and she asked about the construction status of the cupola on Whipple Hall. Selectman Rollins stated there are two proposals to be considered and this is for restoration of the existing cupola as it is an historical building. Ms. Cook said she was happy to see the project go forward.

Joe Cardillo wanted to know who was making the decisions about the current expenses on the Academy Building. He did not think the current process has been planned out. He questioned what happened to the Building Committee. Mr. Cardillo took a ride to the culverts on Brookside Drive that have been "red-listed" by the state and he felt that one, if not both, could be put off. Although he recognized that might be "red-listed" by the state it does not mean people who drive over are in imminent danger and maybe we could save some money by using local recommendations and expertise. Mr. Cardillo said he understands the preferred construction for concrete open-bottom bridges but there are water lines to be considered and require further consideration. Mr. Cardillo said he did not think (after hearing from several professionals) the wheel-chair ramp is in compliance with ADA regulations since the run is too long and should have been designed with a turn. Mr. Cardillo stated we should get as much information as possible from our local resources and take the time to investigate the issues at hand. He stated the need for residents to take a personal interest in projects and become informed.

Selectman Rollins explained there was a committee formed to oversee and recommend and that Frank Anzalone was hired to be the consultant. Mr. Anzalone is working in conjunction with Richard Lee of Public Works in response to Mr. Cardillo's question. Selectman Rollins thought that due diligence has been done on the current projects and stated these decisions were made with much input and there are government guidelines to be followed. It is important that feedback be given in a timely fashion for these projects to go forward. Selectman Rollins stated the process has been completely transparent and there was much time for residents to comment on any/all of these projects.

Rob Prohl stated the previous cupola price of \$29,000 was cut in half per a recommendation from Jim Perkins but if he had not come forward perhaps the town would have gone ahead and spent the \$29,000. Selectman Rollins stated the town did have the intention of checking with Mr. Perkins to illustrate that a system of "checks-and-balances" is applied.

Maureen Prohl stated it is somewhat of a conundrum and that once a builder has been chosen, one must trust in the builder and the best price.

Chair Helm explained that some people are not happy with the ramp but that it is ADA compliant. There could not be a break in the middle due to space constraints and although it is a straight run it is absolutely ADA compliant. As to the Pleasant Lake Dam project, resident Jud Donaghy was able to give expertise and was invaluable for advice on this project. Mr. Donaghy is an expert in large hydro-electric dams and was not able to bid on the job.

Chair Helm said it is important to find someone who has a level of expertise when considering a project to which Mr. Cardillo agreed and said he is somewhat of a novice on the budget committee; he has learned he should get more first-hand expert advice on these projects which might not necessarily agreed with Richard Lee of Public Works.

Chair Helm said he just wants the facts. Culvert bids due on May 18th at 3 p.m. and then the Selectmen will take a look at all the information that is available concerning design and construction. Joe Cardillo stated he feels the documents have been bid for aluminum/metal culverts and cited Richard Lee's advice that in 20 years these are going to have to be replaced. Mr. Cardillo thought the job should have been bid in two ways for consideration of concrete and metal culverts. Chair Helm said the bids will be reviewed on May 18th and the proper process will be followed and then possible changes will be discussed.

Peter Hoglund asked for a description of the bid process to which Chair Helm explained.

Rob Prohl agreed with Joe Cardillo in that local expertise should be sought from people that may have grown up in town and that Kim Hallquist and the Selectmen can do some of this research.

Selectman Rollins said this responsibility cannot fall only to Kim Hallquist and the Selectmen, it is the residents who know other people in town and the Office of Selectmen need their advice. Selectman Kidder referred to a response received by the Selectmen from resident who had expert advice for the culvert project. She also noted that the engineers will go with state recommendations.

Bruce Hudson said we have to a better job up front so that costs do not escalate after the construction starts. He went on to address the additional work that was done to the handicapped ramp at the gazebo and the Academy Building. Both projects have gone over what was projected. The Academy Building is going to total \$500,000 when the additional money is spent. Selectman Kidder explained the Building Committee recommended that just the roof needed attention, but there was much more work to be done.

Selectman Rollins said every opinion is sought but it is not fair to second guess.

Chair Helm sought opinions on the gravel-road project. The projection is to put \$50,000 to \$100,000 a year into capital reserves for this project. Chair Helm stated we could save that \$50,000 to \$100,000 by way of a long term bond and do some of the roads at today's cost as tomorrow's cost will be more expensive. This scenario would only add .04 to .09 to the tax rate per year for the next 20 years. There are 16 roads to be done. Not all the qualifying roads will be done as there are residents who do not want their roads to be paved. This is a project that is not going away, it can be deferred but eventually the roads will have to be done.

Selectman Rollins said the maintenance of the gravel roads is very costly. These are roads that are specified as dangerous in bad weather such as ice in the winter and this is a problem for first responders. This cost has to be factored in. Tracey MacKenna asked how a determination was made to pave a road and Selectman Kidder replied that "the worst road gets done first" per Richard Lee of Public Works.

A question was asked as to the amount of money that was needed to pave a mile of roadway to which Selectman Kidder said Richard Lee would certainly have that information. The consensus of all residents on a particular road might also be a determination although it was noted that paving should be done in the best interest of the Town first and foremost. The South Cove Road paving was mentioned and it was noted this was done at a total cost of \$15,000 to the town to pave the entire

road (5 miles) because a South Cove Road resident donated an additional \$40,000. Selectman Kidder said the cost of \$55,000 included culvert work and surface preparation.

Kate Turcotte asked about paving on Parkside Road and was told that it is to be done this summer but Chair Helm said he did not think the sidewalk is in the plan. Ms. Turcotte said that at present this sidewalk is dangerous to walk on. Don Sheffield asked if there was a prioritization of the road paving and Chair Helm said the 16 roads have been prioritized. It was stated that Stony Brook is also on the priority list even though there are only 3 residents living on the road. This road is very busy during the morning and evening commute.

Rob Prohl asked what needs to be done in the next 5 years and wondered if a long-term study should be done because all the current projects cannot be accommodated. Peter Hoglund asked for a determination of what makes a life-safety situation. Selectman Rollins referred to the Dennis Mires, P.A. report on the Whipple Memorial Town Hall recommendations. Bruce Hudson asked for a cycle for a preventative maintenance plan be established for the existing buildings in town.

Rob Prohl asked if the 1941 Building was a dead issue. Chair Helm said we had the middle of next month to make a proposal. The School Board has stated that the cafeteria will be renovated and used for meetings. John Cannon asked if the school board has the final say. It is questionable if this has to be brought to the voters.

Renate Kannler asked if the town is actually going to have the money to renovate the 1941 Building if the town does acquire it. Chair Helm said this is why it is so important to come to regular Board of Selectmen meetings rather than stating the issues afterwards or on the street.

Celeste Cook asked if the school board was required to come before the Planning Board to which Chair Helm stated that since they are a governmental entity they do not have to get approval but do have to provide their plans to the Planning Board. June 16th, 2016 is the date when the school board will meet and have a discussion concerning the fate of the building.

Bruce Hudson asked about a bond for financing to do all these projects. Selectman Rollins said the budget committee is this Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. and all are invited. Mr. Hudson reiterated the thought that deferring the project will double the cost of the project. Rob Prohl cited the recent loan of 1.9% on \$460,000 for 10 years thanks to Lake Sunapee Bank.

Tim McMurrich spoke of the recent town meeting in March and the amendment for the K-9 Unit article. Mr. McMurrich did not think there was any debate on the actual motion and thought it was handled very strangely. Joe Cardillo said he "felt cheated" that there was no discussion about the dog and wondered if there was an audio of the motion. John Cannon said this needs to be clarified as he did not think the actual motion was spoken on.

Chair Helm said more people need to come to the process meetings held by the Selectmen as the K-9 Unit was presented and there was much discussion for and against the dog.

Selectman Kidder spoke on behalf of the Recreation Commission:

- "Free Frank Friday" was held on the lawn yesterday

- \$1300 has raised for camper scholarships.
- Elkins Beach will get 2 new large docks, renovated bathrooms and a 2 foot high foot-washing station with benches
- 14 seat passenger van being looked at
- Have hired full staff for water front and camps,
- 65% of swimming lessons are filled.
- Recreation Commission meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 5 o'clock

Selectman Rollins pointed out this morning's *Concord Monitor* newspaper has a picture of Kearsarge High School concert group and choral group that participated in the New York City Festival and did a fantastic job. They received an excellent silver rating as well as high marks on presentation and behavior. Selectman Rollins said we should be proud of these students.

Celeste Cook brought up difficult parking issue at Elkins Beach and Selectman Kidder commented the location of the septic system makes relocation of the parking lot hard.

The next meeting of the CAC is Saturday, August 13th at 7:30 in the morning and will be combined with the Annual Nonresident Taxpayer Meeting.

Maureen Prohl asked for a poll of the residents who live on roads to be paved and if they want paving. Selectman Kidder said Richard Lee also knows where the dangers are and safety issues on the roads.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Vitiello
Recording Secretary
Town of New London, NH