



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 18, 2024

Whipple Memorial Hall

5:30 PM

PRESENT:

Janet Kidder, Chairman
Bill Helm, Selectman
Bebe Hammond Casey, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

John Doyle, New London resident
Sherry Williams, Chair, Library Trustees
Steve Solomon, Library Trustee
Karen Epstein, New London resident
Peter Nichols, New London resident
Peter Hoglund, New London resident
Bob Lyon, New London resident
Colin Beasley, Budget Committee member
Audrey Chijner, Messer Pond Protective Assoc.
Police Chief Emily Cobb

Mike Gelcius, Conservation Commission
Tom Carley, Library Trustee
Jerry Coogan, Library Trustee
Rich Epstein, New London resident
John Ellis, New London resident
Bob Harrington, Public Works Director
Bob Bowers, New London resident
Charlie Kelsey, Budget Committee member
Joe Kubit, New London resident

Selectman Kidder called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Sherry Williams, Chair, Tracy Library Trustees

Sherry Williams met with the Board to inform them that the Trustees have changed their request for capital reserve spending and deposit into the fund. She explained that a recent, second, inspection of the library roof shows that it is not as critical as first thought. She explained because of that inspection the Trustees voted to change plans and delay the roof and continue to research the matter further. They will no longer need the bond of \$375,000. The Library Trustees voted to use \$60,000 to complete the major exterior repairs to the building and the smaller slate roof repair in FY2025. The Trustees voted to increase the capital reserve deposit from \$37,500 to \$60,000. Ms. Williams noted that the Trustees were fortunate to get someone to do the stonewall at a lower cost so they will not have to tap capital reserves for that project. Selectman Helm noted that the Selectmen approved a deposit of \$100,000 with the thought that it would be good to build up the fund, however, the Budget Committee may change the amount.

Bob Lyon asked if the Library Trustees considered doing a capital campaign to raise funds. He observed that the town has many expenditures coming up so getting donations for the library would be helpful; he pledged \$100 if such a campaign was conducted. Ms. Williams noted that she would bring the suggestion back to the Library Trustees.

Audrey Chijner, Messer Pond, Protective Association (MPPA)

Audrey Chijner met with the Board to inform them that the association supports (1) emergency funding in the amount of \$5,000 to the Conservation Commission to address the immediate need in two areas of Clark Pond where there is beaver activity impacting the level of Messer Pond, (2) to support Capital Improvement Program (CIP) watershed stewardship fund going forward to monitor all town lands and (3) to support the increased budget requested by the Conservation Commission.

Ms. Chijner explained that since July 2021, the level of Messer Pond has risen 12-15 inches. They believe this is due to restricted flow from the conservation lands. This results in more damage during storms and increased weed growth. Professionals hired by the MPPA recommend (1) immediately remediating the inlet and outlet blockages and (2) create a plan for the future to better manage these areas in advance of problems.

Mike Gelcius, Vice Chair, Conservation Commission, noted that there was a meeting yesterday about this issue. The Conservation Commission does have a savings account that can be used for this purpose as it does contain funds that have not been gifted for specific purposes such as funds from timber harvests. He noted that for long-term action there should be another fund for that purpose. Mr. Gelcius noted that the Commission is aware of the need to be good stewards of the land they own. Selectman Casey noted that the Clark Pond beaver activity is not new, and she agreed that monitoring the area and spending the funds needed to avoid this situation is important and she supports it. Chair Kidder agreed and noted that if this year the Conservation Commission uses its savings account, then next year when they submit their budget request, they can address the need for funds for dealing with beaver activity. The Board thanked the Messer Pond Protective Association for all its work protecting Messer Pond and its watershed. Ms. Chijner stressed that the MPPA hopes that future planning and monitoring will include not only Conservation Commission owned land but all lands in town.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Ellis about the status of the Colliers project. It was noted that no reports have been received yet, a request for proposals is out to consultants, it is expected that information will be submitted within four weeks. Once the information is received the Selectmen will decide the next steps.

FY2025 budget: amended Dispatching & Public Works OT budgets

Kim Hallquist explained that Bob Harrington has revised his Highway OT budget request by lowering it \$20,000 and Chief Cobb is requesting \$6,000 more for the Dispatching budget for computer support.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to accept the FY2025 budget changes as requested. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Petition Warrant Article – \$900,000 bond

Chair Kidder read the petition aloud:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of nine hundred thousand dollars (\$900,000) for the purpose of (1) purchasing the "McEnrue Trust" property, fronting on Seamans Road, Map 85, Lot 003 (currently assessed for \$435,900) for future Town use as may be determined, with the intent that it will provide protection for town property as it abuts the current Whipple Hall property and the Town Green; and, (2) applying the funds remaining after such purchase for improvements to the Police Department to enhance safety and improve working conditions there. Furthermore, to authorize the issuance of nine hundred thousand dollars (\$900,000) of bonds or notes in compliance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (NH RSA 33:1 et seq. as amended) and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon.

Selectmen Kidder noted that unlike the petitioned article that went before voters last year, the owner of this property was not asked if she was ok with this petition. Additionally, the Police Department has been clear that they do not want to expand onto the neighboring property. Chair Kidder noted that while it may be worthwhile for the town to have this property at some point in the future, it is not a prudent use of town funds to buy it now, and that instead it serves a more important purpose as residential housing. She concluded that the Selectmen are working on a solution to the police facility issue and spending \$900,000 on property that won't further that interest is not a good use of town funds. Selectmen Helm and Casey agreed. Selectman Casey noted that she did appreciate the petitioner's position.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) not to recommend the petitioned warrant article to purchase the McEnrue property. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The petition will go to the Budget Committee for their recommendation and then will be voted on at the Town Meeting.

Memo from Kris McAllister, Chief Assessor, regarding 2023 equalization and ratio study

Kim Hallquist reviewed the memo from Chief Assessor Kris McAllister and noted that the State Department of Revenue reviews property sales and compares them with the town's assessed values to determine the town's assessment ratio; it is 97.2%. Ms. Hallquist noted that the closer to 100% the ratio is, the closer the assessed values are to sales. She noted that the recent sales data provided by Ms. McAllister shows that sales continue to be strong, many coming in over assessed values. Ms. Hallquist concluded that the 97.2% is testament to the good work done by the assessors in the recent update.

Use of remaining ARPA Funds

Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer, reported that the town has committed 25% of its ARPA funds to the water precinct and 25% to the sewer department, leaving \$225,501.51. Previous expenditures approved by the Board include funds for bleachers at the school where Town Meeting is held and body worn cameras for the Police Department \$131,041.51 remaining. Kim Hallquist noted that she is aware of discussions in the Budget Committee for potential suggestions to use the funds and she wanted to remind the Board that the Colliers project and work to the Academy Building to enlarge the Town Clerk-Tax Collectors office and for security upgrade are potential uses for the funds as well.

Selectman Helm felt that the funds should be committed to the upgrades at the Academy Building and for the continuing study of the potential police facility. Selectman Casey agreed.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to commit the balance of the ARPA funds for improvements to the Academy building and professional services associated with the planning of a new police and dispatch facility. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Dedication of the 2023 Town Report

The Board reviewed the list of New London citizens who passed away in 2023 and whose service to the town will be recognized by dedication in the Town Report.

IT WAS MOVED (Bebe Casey) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to dedicate the Town Report to Helen Tucker, Carlton Bradford and Adrienne Lauridsen . THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Kim Hallquist reported that the office is busy with getting the budget completed. She recently met with Tom Manion of New London Hospital, Sue Stuebner of Colby-Sawyer College, Winfried Feneburg and Michael Bessette of Kearsarge Regional School District regarding an initiative that the school is introducing that will include students from kindergarten through high school of the attributes they hope all students will have. The purpose of getting together was to get insight from the hospital, college and town of the program.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS & REPORTS

Selectman Casey reported that the Budget Committee met and finished the review of the regional agencies and lake protective associations; this week they will review capital reserves.

Chair Kidder reported that the Planning Board met and discussed zoning amendments, and the discussion will be continued at their next meeting. The Tri-town Assessing Committee met, New London has 10 abatement applications so far.

Selectman Helm noted that he was unable to attend the recent Water Precinct meeting and asked Karen Epstein if she attended and if so, could she review the meeting. Ms. Epstein reported that the posting for the Main Street water project was done and once they receive proposals from interested contractors as soon as they hear from them the Precinct will be able to make their assessment to move forward.

Rich Epstein asked about comments made by Selectman Helm during discussions with the Energy Committee about three-phase power and he believed Selectman Helm also mentioned the water precinct as well. Selectman Helm noted that there was discussion of three-phase power with the Energy Committee as it relates to location for solar arrays as three-phase power is needed. The town land on Mountain Road does not have three-phase power. In discussions about water sources, the discussion of need for three-phase power came up and Selectman Helm suggested that in the future there may be discussions about bringing three-phase to the stump dump as that location was mentioned by the Energy Committee as a site that could be used for a solar panels.

MEETING MINUTES: Approve Selectmen's Minutes of December 14th, 21st and January 4th

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to accept the minutes of December 14th and 21st and January 4th meetings as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The Board discussed future meetings. The Board discussed meeting on January 25th at 6:00pm, after the Sunapee Sewer Commission meeting and then on February 8th.

APPROVAL OF PAY VOUCHERS, PERMITS etc

Items to be signed:

- Payroll Authorization Vouchers
- Notice of Intent to Cut: Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust, Parcel 061-006-0-0-0, Pleasant Street

IT WAS MOVED (Bebe Casey) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to enter into a nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c): matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board.

Roll call vote: Kidder: Yes; Helm: Yes; Casey: Yes

The Board entered nonpublic session at 6:18 PM.

The Board reentered the public session at 6:34 PM.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to seal the nonpublic session meeting minutes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 6:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Hallquist
Town Administrator

Note: RSA 91-A:2, II provides that “*Minutes of all such meetings, including nonpublic sessions, shall include the names of members, persons appearing before the public bodies, and a brief description of the subject matter discussed and final decisions.*” A video of the entire meeting may be available for viewing on the town website, [New London.NH. gov](http://NewLondon.NH.gov), if more than the brief description contained in these meeting minutes is desired.