



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

January 24, 2022

6:00 PM

### PRESENT:

John Cannon, Chairman  
Nancy Rollins, Selectman  
Janet Kidder, Selectman  
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator  
Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer

### ALSO PRESENT:

Police Chief Emily Cobb; Adam Ricker, Planning & Zoning Administrator; Peter & Karen Hoglund, Peter Bianchi, Colin Beasley, Chris Lorio, Lyndsay Harkins, Melissa Leintz, Joe Cardillo, Michael Williams, John Raby, Phil Sherman, Bob Bowers, Hannah Bianchi, Jerry Coogan, Ken Jacques, Maureen Prohl, Michael Todd, Janet Haines, Pam Perkins, John MacKenna, Paul Gorman, KC & Barry Wright, Nancy Marashio; Will Kidder, Town Clerk-Tax Collector; James Cricenti; Leigh Bosse, *The Messenger*

Selectman Cannon called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

### Update: Police Station Site Review Subcommittee

Colin Beasley, Chair of the Building and Facilities Committee provided an update on the Police Station Site Review Subcommittee. He explained that there are certain criteria they are following in their search principally where along the corridor is the preferred location for a police station, assessment of the pros and cons, etc.; the top 3-5 sites will be presented to the Selectmen. Chief Cobb responded to a request for the top three site by noting that currently the group is looking at nine sites and that list will be narrowed down, but they have not prioritized them by 1,2 & 3 yet.

### Public Comments

- Ken Jacques, Chair of the New London-Springfield Water Precinct Board of Commission attended the meeting. He stated he listened to a presentation by Bill Helm a few weeks ago regarding the purchase of the Cricenti property. Mr. Helm indicated there was town water and sewer going by this property which is true, however what wasn't discussed was how much water was going by or how much water could go by that property and this is something that needs to be taken into consideration before anything else is done.

Mr. Jacques noted that a few days after that meeting he received phone calls from people that live in the precinct, asking if he had looked at the proposed zoning amendments. He wasn't aware of them but agreed to look at them. Mr. Jacques and Rob Thorpe met with Town Planner Adam Ricker last week to get a better understanding of what the zoning changes will mean. Mr. Jacques stated he understands how the zoning changes help the town with respect to housing issues, but the change just in the Commercial district could potentially add 110 units. From the perspective of the precinct, Colby Point is a resource that needs to be taken care of and protected to get the longest life out of it possible. This could put a lot of

stress on how long Colby Point can provide water for the New London and Springfield communities. He just wants everyone to take this into consideration.

- Peter Bianchi attended the meeting to present a petition with 144 signatures to urge the Selectmen not to place an article on the warrant to buy the Cricenti Property on County Road, or any other property, without a thorough and detailed plan for its use. Mr. Bianchi stated there are many other residents of New London that do not want that to happen and noted that the Selectmen represent all the residents and have a duty to do a thorough review which includes input from various committees and organizations within the community.

### **Request of Peter and Karen Hoglund for town to purchase land behind the Highway Garage**

Karen Hoglund explained this proposal is in regard to a piece of land behind Barrett Road that runs down to Pleasant Street behind the Highway Department. This is an approximately 8-acre lot that is on the east side of the Lyon Brook trail. Their property abuts one part of it and the Highway Department abuts the Northern part of it.

The Hoglunds made an offer on the property a few years ago and it was not accepted. The town got involved because they were potentially interested in buying it so they would have future land for the Highway Department if it was needed. The town felt it was priced well over the assessed value so didn't buy it. Ms. Hoglund is asking if they were to contribute \$25,000 to the purchase perhaps, they could buy it together with the town. They could do a lot line adjustment to protect their part of their property and the town could have the useful part for the Highway Department.

Chair Cannon stated the Building and Facilities Committee looked into this last year. There was an effort to negotiate with the property owner as the price was too high, but the owners did not seem to want to come down on the price.

Selectman Rollins suggested if there is interest in moving forward with this, then an appraisal should be done. Chair Cannon agreed with this. Selectman Kidder responded there is not a thorough and detailed analysis of a plan for the Highway Department's use. Since there is no plan, it seems to be an expensive piece of property and she would not be in favor of purchasing it. Selectman Kidder also noted that the Building and Facilities Committee is recommending this and Mr. Hoglund is a member of the Building and Facilities Committee and questioned whether his vote on the BFC to recommend the purchase by town was a conflict of interest. Mr. Hoglund stated his goal is to help the town preserve land and this will help the DPW with future development.

Bob Bowers stated this proposal does have a plan in place. The Conservation Commission had weighed in on it a while back and although they wanted to have it, they felt it was too expensive. The Selectmen previously looked at it and thought it was overpriced but we now have someone looking to add dollars to it. The Building and Facilities Committee has recommended that this purchase go forward. Mr. Bowers suggested that you have to look toward the future and what may happen at the highway department, noting that the Highway Department property is almost fully utilized. This would help with future expansion. He suggested the Selectmen consider what the DPW property would be worth with the addition of this land. He urged the Selectmen to give this serious consideration. There would most likely not be time to get an appraisal prior to the Budget Committee public hearing on February 2, 2022. However, if it went on the warrant and the appraisal doesn't come in where we want, we don't have to buy it.

The Board directed Town Administrator Kim Hallquist to investigate when an appraisal could be done.

## **Reconciliation with Selectmen's Budget – Budget Committee**

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist reported that currently the Budget Committee and the Selectmen differ in two areas of the budget. The Budget Committee voted to include \$30,000 for the records digitization project that was removed by the Selectmen, and they also added in \$15,000 for the Planning Boards corridor study that the Selectmen removed.

**Record Digitization Project** - Chair Cannon explained with regards to the digitization project, they felt that \$30,000 wouldn't be enough to make a dent and although they understand the need for the project, there were other competing needs. There would be plans in the future to add this line item into the budget. Chris Lorio asked when this would be as this has been dragging on for years. Michael Williams asked if the Selectmen would consider a reserve account so there is money in there when it's time to move forward. Kim Hallquist stated they could have to ask voters to establish a new capital reserve for this, fund it and save up. Selectman Rollins felt it would be prudent to speak with whoever would be doing the digitization to get a proposal on how much it would cost in terms of time and money. She would support putting money into a capital reserve fund if she knew how it would be accomplished. Kim Hallquist stated they would not be able to get a detailed plan prior to February 2, 2022 as it would need to go to the Budget Hearing. Ms. Hallquist spoke with vendors in 2014 and got estimates of up to \$100,000. Ms. Hallquist stated that even though it is eight years later, technology has improved so the cost may even be less. It will depend on whether the Selectmen want the records to leave the site and have it done offsite or whether the vendor does the work on site. Selectman Rollins would like a dollar amount of what it would take to get a professional come in and give us a full scope of work and how much time it would take in the next two or three years. She would like to do it as a capital reserve fund so if there is an amount such as \$15,000 to at least get that professional opinion she would like thoughts about whether or not that is feasible.

Colin Beasley stated this represents about 3% of the budget and it is time to kick start what has been talked about since 2014 with regards to managing storage in the town. Joe Cardillo is in favor of creating a capital reserve account with funding for this project with the Selectmen as agents to expend so it doesn't have to go to a town meeting vote each time money needs to be spent. This indicates to the town that we are paying attention to this topic. The Police Department has had success in digitizing their records and it's time for the rest of the town to do this as well.

**IT WAS MOVED (John Cannon) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to establish a capital reserve fund for digitization of town records with the Selectmen as agents to expend in the amount of \$15,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (John Raby) to add \$30,000 to the capital reserve fund for digitization of town records. All were in favor with exception of Melissa Leintz and John Cannon who were opposed. THE MOTIN WAS APPROVED.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to establish a capital reserve fund for digitization of town records with the Selectmen as agents to expend in the amount of \$30,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Selectman Rollins noted that while she approved adding \$30,000 she does expect that there will be \$15,000 of unexpended funds that could be used towards this from the current budget.

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (John Raby) by the Budget Committee to remove \$30,000 from the operating budget. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Main Street Corridor Study** – Chair Cannon stated initially he didn't support funding this study as the purposes behind it didn't seem clear. At the Budget Committee hearing a better explanation was given and he changed his mind. Since that time there has been discussion that there is no real urgency as the work is two or three years down the road, so he retains his original position of not funding the study.

Colin Beasley noted this represents 1% of the budget and while it is 2-3 years away, it is his understanding that it will help gain a perspective about what Main Street should look like. The study needs to be done in advance of the work being done so they have the information to be able to negotiate how it will be put back together.

Selectman Rollins stated she didn't vote for it the first time as she felt there was a less than complete proposal about what would transpire. She would like to know how the \$15,000 amount was arrived at. Town Planner Adam Ricker stated the Master Plan subcommittee has proposed a draft RFP of what they are looking for regarding the study. He is hoping to have money in the budget first to show the consultants they are committed to moving forward. This is most likely a multi-phase project and there is some money left in the Master Plan capital reserve that could be combined with the \$15,000. He understands that with the Housing Commission study that there are potentially a lot of consultant's studies that would be going on but it would be great to get this done this year.

The corridor study would look at Main Street and would review multi levels of transportation including pedestrian, biking and vehicular as well as traffic and parking. It would be a precursor to looking into form-based code which is an implementation strategy of the Master Plan.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to restore the Main Street Corridor Study budget line item in the amount of \$15,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Joe Cardillo questioned the compensation budget item in the amount of \$15,000. Selectman Rollins explained that salary studies are typically done in town and state government as a way to recalibrate what the base is. By doing the study you are looking at comparisons of other towns of similar size and looks at whether there is parody in the private sector that you might be losing government employees to. It may be that our entry level positions are too low and under scaled or it could be our top positions might be higher than normal. It is done to maintain that the wages are competitive and we are able to retain workers. These studies are generally done every 5-8 years.

John Raby stated it is important to stay competitive in the private and public sectors and it has been some time since we've last had a study. We need to be aware of inflation and be able to retain our employees. He supports having a wage study done.

All warrant articles and the entire budget will be reviewed on February 2, 2022 at the Public Hearing.

Colin Beasley shared some numbers with the group about the increases year over year since 2019. He would like to be able to explain to the citizens of the town why the revenue is flat and taxes are higher. He proposed that the budget committee meet each month with department heads to get more detail and understand all areas of the budget in depth. He would like to talk process and getting information in a different flow, for example, revenues should not be left until the end of the process. There have not been any conversations about revenue growth and this could impact how decisions are

made. Jerry Coogan responded that the Budget Committee can only do what they are authorized by statute to do and this sounds like a deep dive into fiscal management that is beyond the responsibility of the budget committee. He feels this is the responsibility of the administration. Ms. Hallquist responded that Mr. Beasley isn't talking about management, he's talking about getting information and understanding it and the Budget Committee is empowered to do this. Mr. Beasley stated he is talking about being informed about the budgets we are approving. Chair Lorio would like to table this discussion until new members are elected after town meeting so they can be included.

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (John Raby) to adjourn the Budget Committee portion of the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **New Business**

#### **Petition submitted at last meeting asking Selectmen to place a Town Meeting warrant article to purchase Cricenti property – signatures validated by Town Clerk**

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist reported that Town Clerk Will Kidder has confirmed the signatures of the 77 registered voters on the petition.

#### **Warrant article for repairs and upgrades to Whipple and Buker**

Ms. Hallquist reported the Building and Facilities Committee has a list of items they recommend get done and suggest appropriating \$600,000 to fund them. This includes tables, chairs, exterior paint, storm windows and exterior base building repairs, among other items. Selectman Kidder is not in favor of this and feels there are other things that need to be accomplished. Selectman Rollins stated this is our town hall and she has been saying for years that we need to make an investment in this building so it can be utilized for meetings such as this, noting that COVID isn't going away any time soon and we need a meeting space that allows for social distancing. We need to appropriate these funds to move forward and make these improvements to Whipple Hall. John Cannon feels the price for the sprinkler system seems low. Phil Sherman responded that this was an accurate estimate a year and a half ago.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to place a town meeting warrant article in the amount of \$600,000 to complete the work for repairs and upgrades to Whipple Town Hall. Nancy Rollins: Yes, Janet Kidder: No, John Cannon: Yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED.**

#### **Warrant article to remove condition placed on 2021 Warrant Article #17 sale of town land**

Ms. Hallquist reported that the person who wanted to purchase land from the town on King Hill Road that was approved at town meeting last year found that the town could not give him a clear title because it is a tax deduced piece of property. He asked that the Selectmen help with the legal expense to get try to get a clear title and the Selectmen decided not to do that. He is now asking that the Selectmen put a warrant article on the town meeting warrant to ask voters to eliminate the requirement that was placed on the article last year to merge the purchased piece of property to his property. He doesn't want to add a property that doesn't have clear title to his property as it would affect the title for the entire piece.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to place a warrant article to remove condition placed on 2021 Warrant article #17 sale of town land. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**FY2023 COLA**

Ms. Hallquist stated the Selectmen originally set the COLA at 2.5%. Since then, she's heard that other towns are going with higher COLA's and she recommends that the Selectmen increase the COLA for New London employees for FY2023 to 4.5% as it is important to stay competitive with area towns. This would start on July 1, 2022. The cost to go to that amount is an additional \$67,099. Selectman Kidder agrees and feels we should show our town employees that we support them.

Selectmen Rollins stated we do need to look at the revenue growth in this town and stability as much as expenditures. She has concerns about the future and predictions being made relative to where this recession is headed. We need to be able to look at how to control costs, stay competitive, have quality but find balance. There should be many eyes on our health insurance plans and the cost of the ambulance service as we move forward.

**IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to increase the FY2023 COLA to 4.5%. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **Dedication of 2021 Town Report**

Ms. Hallquist stated the Selectman have the list of people who have passed away in 2021 and the Selectmen generally decide which of the citizens of New London they want to dedicate the report to. Ms. Hallquist stated the ones that stand out to her on the list include Jessie Levine who served as the town administrator for ten years, Louise Bailey and Mary Teach. The Selectmen agreed to dedicate the town report to those three individuals.

### **Capital Reserve Fund expenditures: Whipple Hall electrical upgrades, dispatch equipment and Tracy library sprinkler project**

Ms. Hallquist stated the Board needs to vote to approve Capital Reserve transfers. The work includes electrical upgrades which is in conjunction with the AV work being done in Whipple in the amount of \$5,916, dispatch equipment in the amount of \$7,386 and Tracy library sprinkler project in the amount of \$15,064.49.

Police Chief Emily Cobb provided an update regarding the tower and dispatch equipment. Chief Cobb spoke with Homeland Security and the project is approved. The funds will be released in March.

**IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to approve Capital Reserve expenditures for Whipple Hall electrical upgrades, dispatch equipment and Tracy Library sprinkler project. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT**

Ms. Hallquist provided the following report:

- Ms. Hallquist and Chief Cobb participated in a zoom meeting to hear more about the Boys and Girls club which is operating next door in the Baptist Church.
- Ms. Hallquist, Adam Rick, Bob Harrington, Chief Cobb and Chief Lyon participated in the DOT park and ride expansion project to review and discuss the preliminary design. DOT will next meet with the Conservation Commission to get their input before meeting with the Selectmen in March.
- Municipal Resources was in doing an inspection of the Academy Building to gather information to report on safety upgrades for the building.
- There was an article in the *Intertown Record* regarding Outing Club funding that was inaccurate as it stated that no taxpayer funds are used; New London taxpayers contributed

\$40,000 to the Outing Club this year. Ms. Hallquist stated there was confusion by taxpayers who thought the town did give the Outing Club funds; Ms. Hallquist noted that she contacted the Outing Club about inaccurate statements on their website and hopefully it will be corrected.

- The equalization ratio study by Assessor Kris McAllister will show the town's assessments to be in the 70%/80% range when we are typically in the 90's. This is a reflection on the fact that properties are selling higher than the assessed valuation. This is happening everywhere.
- The hope is that the A/V upgrades in Whipple will be done by March. The shades should be installed by the end of January and the acoustic panels by the end of February.
- Hospital Days planning has started for 2022 – it will be held in August as in past pre-Covid years.
- The Recreation Department is putting on Winter Festival on February 5 & 6, 2022. There will be fireworks and fun activities.
- There was a change to the Board of Selectmen meetings for February; meetings will be held on February 14 and 28, 2022 as February 21<sup>st</sup> is a holiday.

## **COMMITTEE MEETINGS & REPORTS**

**Planning Board** – Janet Kidder reported the Planning Board met on January 11, 2022. They discussed the proposed 2022 zoning amendments, and they were all approved. There was also a minor subdivision and annexation that was approved.

Selectman Kidder had a meeting with the Lakes Advisory Committee, and they discussed various legislation they are reviewing including wakeboarding.

**Housing Commission** – Selectman Rollins stated the Housing Commission met on January 4, 2022. They discussed the proposal for zoning review and talked about a change in leadership for the commission.

**MEETING MINUTES: Approve the Selectmen's Minutes of December 20<sup>th</sup> & January 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2021 and January 3, 2022 meetings. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS**

- Selectmen's meeting – Wednesday, Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> – Budget Hearing– 6:30 PM - Whipple Town Hall
- Next Regular Selectmen's meeting – Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- Police Station Site Review Subcom. – Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> – 1:00 PM – PD Training Room
- Planning Board – Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- Housing Commission – Wednesday, Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 PM – 6:00 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- Public Hearing FY2023 Budget – Wednesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6:30 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- Citizen's Advisory Committee meeting – Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup> – 7:30 AM – Whipple Town Hall

**Please see the calendar on the town website for meeting locations and a complete listing of other meetings, including subcommittee meetings, of the various town boards:**

[www.NewLondon.NH.gov](http://www.NewLondon.NH.gov)

## **APPROVAL OF PAY VOUCHERS, PERMITS etc.**

### **Items to be signed:**

- Accounts Payable Vouchers
- Town Use Application
- Birthday Cards (February)

### **Applications Approved &/or Denied**

#### **Sign Permits – approved**

#### **Building Permits-approved**

- Douglas Lyon, TM 098-013-0-0-0. Install roof mount solar 7.6kW. BP 22-01. Approved. 1/11/2022.
- 30 Pleasant St Realty Trust, TM 084-055-0-0-0. Convert laundry rm to new bathroom w/shower, construct interior wall & doorway 2nd story bedroom. BP 22-02. Approved. 1/14/2022.
- Kevin & Karen O’Leary, TM 073-005-0-0-0. Reno bathroom. Remove tub replace w/shower and laundry hook-up. BP 22-03. Approved. 1/14/2022.
- Mark Kellett, TM 095-036-0-0-0. Install new 14kW Generac standby generator in place of existing. BP 22-04. Approved. 1/14/2022.
- Jane & John Walsh, TM 060-015-0-0-0. Addition of new entry from garage into existing dining room. Replace 2 windows. BP 22-05. Approved. 1/21/2022.

#### **Zoning Permits-approved**

#### **Temporary Event/Sale Permits-approved**

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:58PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Trina Dawson  
Recording Secretary  
Town of New London