



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## NEW LONDON BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
Whipple Memorial Town Hall  
6:30 PM

**BUDGET COMMITTEE PRESENT:** Chris Lorio (Chair), Lou Botta (Vice Chair), John Wilson, Mark Christensen, Charles Kelsey, Karen Epstein, Megan Brown, John Tilley, Lyndsay Harkins, Bebe Casey, Selectman Representative

**STAFF:** Kimberly Hallquist, Town Administrator; Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer

### ALSO PRESENT:

Sam Clarke, Department of Public Works Director  
Adam Ricker, Planning & Zoning Admin.  
Fire Chief Jay Lyon  
Rich Epstein, New London resident  
Richard Tutwiler, Tracy Library Director  
Vickie Stafford, Land Use & Assess. Coord.  
Police Lt. David Keith

Putnam Kidder, Recreation Director  
Police Chief Emily Cobb  
Will Kidder, Town Clerk-Tax Collector  
Joe Cardillo, New London resident  
Colin Beasley, New London resident  
Janet Kidder, Selectman  
Heidi Dunlap, Police Department AA

Chair Lorio called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

### Meeting Minutes:

December 18, 2024:

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to approve the Minutes of December 18, 2024. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

January 8, 2025:

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to approve the Minutes of January 8, 2025. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

January 15, 2025:

Charles Kelsey noted that typos: page 4: vote on recreation budget reduction of \$2,000 shows John Tilley as opposed when he abstained; corrections to spelling of Christensen and Kelsey.

**IT WAS MOVED (John Wilson) AND SECONDED (Lou Botta) to approve the Minutes of January 15, 2025 as corrected. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### Selectmen's Report

Selectman Casey provided the following report:

- Police Facility Project (Phase Two): The Selectmen met on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and focused on proposed

warrant articles for phase two of the police facility project. The purchase and sale agreement was discussed: purchase price is \$350,000 and include conditions: a public way to be constructed for access to the property, dark sky compliant lighting and a right of first refusal to the Garvey family if the town decides to sell the property.

Funding Options Discussed: the initial proposal was for two warrant articles, one using unspent fund balance (\$1.8 million) for the property purchase of \$350,000 and \$40,000 for legal fees, subdivision and site investigation (total \$400,000) and the second article using bonding the remaining \$555,000. The Selectmen ultimately decided to go with one warrant article for the full amount of \$955,000 covering the property purchase, closing costs, and site-related expenses like excavation and engineering. This change lowered the debt interest due to reduced borrowing from \$2 million to \$955,000.

- Dispatch Center Study: A request for a study for the dispatch center was raised by residents. The Selectmen deferred a decision on the study until FY2026 when there will be a new Selectman and a new Town Administrator.
- Town Administrator Retirement: Kim's retirement has been announced – it is scheduled for the end of June after 14 years of service. The Selectmen hired MRI Consultants to assist in the recruitment of a new town administrator. The goal is to hire within 90 days, allowing time for the new hire to shadow Kim and ensure a smooth transition.
- Recreation Department Budget Adjustment: The Selectmen reinstated \$50,000 to the Recreation Department's budget after it had been previously removed from the director's salary line.
- Mount Sunapee Septic Lagoon Issue: The GM of Mount Sunapee (Vail Resorts) met with the Board and gave an update of the septic lagoon issue at the ski area. The septic system at Mount Sunapee, installed in 1971, has shown environmental compliance issues per the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). Vail Resorts must submit a remediation plan by February 1. The concern is of the potential environmental risks if the system fails, especially threats to Lake Sunapee. Costs for remediation will be borne by Vale Resorts, not the state, based on lease agreements.

### **FY2026 Final Budget Review**

Chair Lorio explained that the committee would review the comparative budget sheet line by line, giving members the opportunity to raise questions before consideration for approval.

Executive: \$445,260

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (Megan Brown) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: \$162,777

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (Lou Botta) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Finance: \$480,577

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Lyndsay Harkins) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Assessing: \$101,088

There was a discussion of whether budgets should be grouped together for consideration instead of going line-by-line. Karen Epstein suggested that line-by-line would be more helpful for her. The committee agreed.

**THE ASSESSING BUDGET WAS APPROVED.**

Legal: \$20,500

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Lyndsay Harkins) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Personnel Administration: \$146,192

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (Lou Botta) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Zoning & Planning: \$149,205

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Buildings: \$281,435

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Cemetery: \$32,733

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Chris Lorio) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Other Insurance: \$152,636

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Advertising and Regional Association: \$22,309

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Megan Brown) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Police: \$1,682,891

Lou Botta shared his experience volunteering at the Manchester Airport and his discussions with Londonderry Police Officers who told him that that town offers \$25,000-\$30,000 bonuses to get police officers. He noted that he is very uncomfortable with any reductions in public safety (police, fire and public works) budgets without adequate justification. He pointed to the reduction of \$2,000 in the accreditation line and suggested they consider putting \$2,000 back in.

Chief Cobb explained that the accreditation program was reconstituted in New Hampshire over the past couple of years. It was one of the recommendations that came out of the 2020 Commission on Law Enforcement Accountability, Community, Transparency (LEACT) that police departments get accredited. There are two ways to become accredited: (1) CALEA, which is the Commission for Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies which is a much more expensive method to get accredited and (2) the State of New Hampshire has a program that is administered by the police standards and training. In the last few years since the recommendation came out, the state has started to offer grant money in order to entice departments to become accredited. Chief Cobb noted that she has not started the accreditation process yet, observing that anyone who's ever been through an accreditation process knows it's very, very time intensive, and it requires a lot of hours to go toward it, toward getting your policies, your facilities, and other things just up to par.

Chief Cobb noted that she selected that line for reduction as there is a possibility she could get a grant for the work, and if not, she would try to find the funds in the budget if she determined that starting the accreditation process was something she could take on, as it is a time-consuming process.

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Mark Christensen) to increase the police budget by \$2,000 for accreditation. Vote in favor: Botta, Christensen, Casey, Harkins, Brown. Opposed: Wilson,**

**Lorio, Epstein, Tilley, Kelsey. THE MOTION FAILED**

Lou Botta asked the committee to consider raising the new employee line by \$5,000 to account for the expenses when a new officer is hired. Chief Cobb explained the costs of uniforms and equipment needed for a new officer, noting that the budget contains funds for one new officer, if the department had to hire more than one the expense would have to be found somewhere in the budget. A motion by Lou Botta to raise the line by \$5,000 did not get a second.

Karen Epstein asked for additional information on the cruiser related to the state bid price versus the budgeted amount discussed at previous meetings. Chief Cobb noted that she contacted the dealership again for more information and learned that when an agency orders the cruiser, there may be additional equipment options that are needed, such as a spotlight which New London orders with the cruiser and the state installs it after they get the cruiser. Paint color is another area that can change the price, New London orders a certain color while the state takes any color and paints the vehicle after delivery. Ms. Epstein thanked the Chief for the clarification.

John Wilson discussed the mileage on the car scheduled to be replaced, about 80,000 miles, and noted that he sees other departments keeping their vehicles well over 100,000 miles and questioned replacing a vehicle with such low mileage. He suggested that in his view, the car in question has 3.68 years of life left on it. The reason for replacing it that he was given was that we have the two cruisers that will be coming up for replacement at the same time and if this vehicle is delayed, it would mean three cruisers at once, which would be a big spike that year in the cost. Dr. Wilson concluded by noting that he did not think the town should give up three to four years of life on a car just because of an accounting problem and he felt that the car is worth \$80,000 to the town, not the \$8,000 auction price and for those reasons, he is against funding that car.

Chief Cobb noted that she did not believe that the car has another three to four years left in it. The department's experience with the Tahoe that was most recently replaced, with 102,000 miles on it, cost the town almost \$11,500 in maintenance costs in FY2024. She concluded by pointing out that in her opinion, it has not been their experience to get 120,000 or 130,000 miles out of a Tahoe; the most recent Tahoe the town had, considerable funds were used in later years for repairs.

There was a discussion of engine hours and how it might impact decisions to replace vehicles, average speed of the vehicle being lower (10mph versus average 30 mph for other vehicles) as impacting the useful life of the police cruisers. Chief Cobb also noted that she is beginning to research leasing vehicles in the future as a possible way to lower expenses.

**IT WAS MOVED (John Wilson) AND SECONDED (Karen Epstein) to lower the police budget by \$60,000, the new cruiser line. Vote in favor: Wilson, Epstein, Opposed: Lorio, Botta, Christensen, Casey, Harkins, Brown, Tilley, Kelsey. THE MOTION FAILED**

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (Lou Botta) to APPROVE THE POLICE BUDGET AS PRESENTED. Vote in favor: Lorio, Botta, Christensen, Casey, Harkins, Brown, Tilley, Kelsey; Opposed: Epstein; Abstained: Wilson. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED**

Fire Department and Firewards: \$848,520

Karen Epstein, noting that the additional firefighter in the current budget represents a big change in the fire department budget, and there will likely be additional firefighters in subsequent years, asked Chief Lyon if he would present to the Budget Committee at a future meeting with a strategic plan for how those additional firefighters would fit in, and fit into the force, so that the committee can see down the road. She pointed out that it is her understating that the chief will be applying for a grant or two come spring, so she is very interested in hearing how those new individuals, if they were to get approved, are hired, how they would fit in with the force going forward. Chief Lyon stated that he would be happy to meet with the Budget Committee to discuss it further. He pointed to the handout he provided that shows the potential impacts if the town was to get the grant and what it would look like without the grant.

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Lyndsay Harkins) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Emergency Management: \$11,450

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. Vote in favor: Lorio, Wilson, Christensen, Casey, Harkins, Brown, Tilley, Kelsey, Epstein; Abstained: Botta. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED**

Dispatch: \$680,683

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Highway Administration: \$1,178,391

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (Lou Botta) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Highways & Streets: \$612,700

**IT WAS MOVED (John Tilley) AND SECONDED (Chris Lorio) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Street Lighting: \$12,000

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (Lou Botta) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Transfer Station: \$555,622

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Solid Waste: \$42,750

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (Lou Botta) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Health Administration: \$6,271

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Health Agencies: \$245,158

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Welfare Administration: \$16,598

**IT WAS MOVED (John Tilley) AND SECONDED (Lou Botta) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Inter-gov Welfare: \$6,000

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (Megan Brown) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Welfare Payments: \$40,000

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Chris Lorio) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Recreation: \$236,929

Karen Epstein made a motion to reduce the Recreation budget by \$2,000 because it was very kindly offered up on all three scenarios by the Director of the Recreation Department and by the Recreation Commission that they could take \$2,000 out of the budget, from the special event line. She pointed out that all departments were asked to find cuts so her thinking was that this reduction would be fair across the board. Mark Christensen noted that the budget as submitted is lower than the previous year. Recreation Director Putnam Kidder confirmed that he could utilize the \$2,000 for other programming if it was not needed for the Halloween event.

**IT WAS MOVED (Karen Epstein) AND SECONDED (John Wilson) to lower the recreation budget by \$2,000 from the special events line. Vote in favor: Wilson, Epstein, Kelsey Opposed: Lorio, Botta, Christensen, Casey, Harkins, Brown, Tilley. THE MOTION FAILED**

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (Megan Brown) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. Vote in favor: Lorio, Botta, Christensen, Casey, Harkins, Brown, Tilley. Opposed: Epstein, Wilson, Kelsey. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED .**

Library: \$756,695

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (Lou Botta) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Patriotic Purposes: \$300

**IT WAS MOVED (John Tilley) AND SECONDED (Chris Lorio) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Archives/Culture: \$7,000

**IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Conservation: \$26,380

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Energy Committee: \$900

**IT WAS MOVED (John Tilley) AND SECONDED (Chris Lorio) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Other Conservation: \$31,400

Lyndsay Harkins inquired about what was included in this line, Lynn Lewis responded that the bulk of it is the protective associations, and it also includes care of trees and the Garden Club.

**IT WAS MOVED (John Tilley) AND SECONDED (Megan Brown) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Housing Commission: \$6,500

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (Chris Lorio) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Debt Service Principal: \$310,205

Karen Epstein asked if there was a capital expenditure included in the debt service that was not approved by town meeting, would the budget amount be adjusted. Kim Hallquist explained that the budget must include all expenditures that are considered at town meeting, if there are items that are not approved, the budgeted amounts will be adjusted down (or up, if applicable) and the report of what was actually appropriated will be submitted to

the DRA.

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (Lyndsay Harkins) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Debt Service Interest: \$125,928

Chair Lorio noted that the amount has been lowered, reflecting the reduction in interest as a result of the change from \$2 million for the police state project to \$955,000.

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Sewer Department: \$1,036,831

**IT WAS MOVED (John Tilley) AND SECONDED (Megan Brown) to APPROVE AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Transfers to Capital Reserves: \$1,156,000:

- \$54,000 - Fire Breathing Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund.
- \$116,000 - Fire Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund.
- \$500,000 - Highway Equipment Replacement Fund.
- \$100,000 - Sidewalk Capital Reserve.
- \$200,000 - Tracy Memorial Library Repair Capital Reserve.
- \$100,000 - Town Building Maintenance Capital Reserve.
- \$20,000 - Energy Projects Capital Reserve.
- \$66,000 - Sewer Department Capital Reserve Fund.

**IT WAS MOVED (Chris Lorio) AND SECONDED (John Tilley) to APPROVE TRANSFERS TO CAPITAL RESERVE FUNDS AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Warrant Articles: Purchase Using Capital Reserve Funds:

\$132,303 for lease payment of Fire Engine #2

**THE VOTE TO RECOMMEND AS PRESENTED WAS UNANIMOUS**

\$350,000 Fire breathing apparatus

**THE VOTE TO RECOMMEND AS PRESENTED WAS UNANIMOUS**

\$275,000 New chassis for tanker 1

**THE VOTE TO RECOMMEND AS PRESENTED WAS UNANIMOUS**

\$60,000 for exterior repairs to Tracy Library

**THE VOTE TO RECOMMEND AS PRESENTED WAS UNANIMOUS**

Warrant Articles: Other funding sources:

\$25,000 website improvements

**THE VOTE TO RECOMMEND AS PRESENTED WAS UNANIMOUS**

\$40,000 refurbishing of historic markers – town created trust funds

**THE VOTE TO RECOMMEND AS PRESENTED WAS UNANIMOUS**

\$10,000 expendable trust fund for accumulated leave time buyout

**THE VOTE TO RECOMMEND AS PRESENTED WAS UNANIMOUS**

\$955,000 for the police station project which will be a bond requiring a 3/5 vote to approve.

Kim Hallquist explained that the cost of the land is \$350,000 and the remainder, \$605,000 will be used for survey and subdivision expense, site work including test borings, clearing, grading, design work for the police station, etc. Charlie Kelsey asked for clarification of what might happen if significant issues were found during the investigation of the Seamans Road site, that if that happened and the costs to develop were significantly more, putting the cost in over the town's debt limit, the town would have an out. Ms. Hallquist agreed and noted that in such a scenario, where the Selectmen no longer felt that the site was appropriate, they would stop spending the money that was appropriated and go back to town meeting to see what voters wanted to do: spend more money to remediate the issues, keep the property to use it for something else, or asking town meeting to sell the land. If the land is to be sold, it would be offered first to the Garvey family as they will retain a right to purchase.

Karen Epstein asked if the purchase & sale agreement was in place. Kim Hallquist noted that it was not but the town is working with the owners to execute one and she expected it soon. Ms. Epstein asked if the agreement would be public once it is in place, noting that while she appreciates the summary of the conditions, she would like to see them in the agreement. Ms. Hallquist noted that the agreement would be available to the public. Ms. Epstein observed that she felt that being asked to approve the purchase of the land without first seeing the agreement was like 'putting the cart before the horse'.

Joe Cadillo addressed the committee and asked if the town decided to sell the property back to the Garvey's, would they first have to put the road in. Ms. Hallquist noted that it would be built as part of the development of the property, it would not be built if the land was sold back to the Garvey's. He asked if the P&S would be specific as to the length and location of the road; Ms. Hallquist noted that it would not as that information will not be known until the site review is complete.

**THE VOTE TO RECOMMEND AS PRESENTED: Vote in favor: Casey, Lorio, Botta, Brown, Tilley, Christensen, Kelsey. Opposed: Wilson, Epstein. THE ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED**

Karen Epstein noted that she felt the decision to bring this request forward was rushed and the amount of downsizing that will need to be done to stay within the town's debt limit is a concern to her. After several months of watching this process develop, these issues are weighing heavily on her mind and that is why she cannot support it. Chair Lorio noted that while he appreciates that it may seemed rushed to some, in his opinion the discussion of land for the police station has been going on for many years and for him it feels good that the town will be finally able to make a decision one way or the other.

### **Public Hearing**

The Public Hearing will be held on Wednesday, February 5, 2025.

Karen Epstein asked that the committee agree to schedule a meeting after the public hearing, like it did last year, to have a review of the budget process and to discuss ways in which the committee could do things in the off season to be better informed. She suggested holding the meeting while the outgoing members are still on the committee so that their input could be included. Chair Lorio will send an email out with potential dates.

Lou Botta noted that the committee has a big impact on the town however it does not have a strategic master plan to work with that will guide them in making budgeting decisions for the town in the coming years. He explained that he felt that the year-by-year review the committee currently does as its process is not as effective as it could be. He suggested that a cohesive master plan be prepared.

John Tilley agreed with Lou and suggested that Bebe Casey take the recommendation to the Selectmen as something they consider during the hiring of the next Town Administrator.

Next meeting: Public Hearing on February 5<sup>th</sup>.

After the public hearing, the Budget Committee will take a final vote on the budget and sign the MS-737.

**IT WAS MOVED (Lyndsay Harkins) AND SECONDED (Megan Brown) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 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.