



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 5, 2023

Whipple Hall

6:00 PM

PRESENT:

Nancy Rollins, Chairman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Bill Helm, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator
Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

Emily Cobb, Police Chief	Will Kidder, Town Clerk-Tax Collector
Phil Sherman, Whipple Hall Project	Colin Beasley, New London resident
Frank Anzalone, Whipple Hall Project	John Lewis, New London resident
Peter Hoglund, New London resident	Bob Bowers, New London resident
Jamie Hess, Energy Committee	John Ellis, New London resident
Lisa Hess, Energy Committee	Bill Partridge, New London resident
Renata Kannler, New London resident	
Peter Nichols, Tom Vannatta, Housing Commission	
Bob Brown Michael Kennedy, Mark Vernon, Rob Prohl, Conservation Commission	

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

Whipple Hall Project Update

Phil Sherman and Frank Anzalone of the Whipple Hall project committee attended the meeting to provide an update on the Whipple Hall project.

Mr. Sherman stated the purpose of the presentation tonight is to provide an interim status report, present some additional pricing information and ideally gain approval of procedure, final design and bidding at which time they will return for the final decision as to the scope of the project. The committee has met six times with additional meetings and discussions with the architect and the scope of work was developed based on the Mires report, not including the work completed to date or the balcony work as instructed. North Branch has been retained as the construction manager. As indicated in the memo that was previously forwarded, the pricing is preliminary and intended to give a sense of where we are. By nature, these prices hopefully will prove to be conservative. The scope of work will improve but will not entirely correct the acoustic problem that occurs when the heaters are running.

Mr. Sherman stated per the memo, estimates on the current scope significantly exceed the budget. As a result, they have come up with three alternatives. The first alternative includes the entire scope of work as it stands today and requires additional funding estimated at about \$274,000 over the \$600,000. The second alternative points out that some of the items in the scope might be classified as maintenance

related and might be subject to additional maintenance funding. This is estimated to require about \$115,000 in maintenance funding, leaving \$159,000 in additional funding necessary. The third alternative stays within the \$600,000 budget and does not require additional funding. This is accomplished by deferring most of the interior and exterior maintenance items, eliminating electrical power to the tables and electrical outlets that support them and deferring the sprinklers in the Buker building attic. The final pricing allows, if possible, some things such as floor refinishing that could be included in the final scope.

The Committee's recommendation is to adopt the first alternative but think it best to hold on this decision and proceed with final design and estimating. What is being requested tonight is approval to continue with the design in order to return to the Board at a later date with final pricing for their final decision on the project scope.

Selectman Kidder asked if the chairs could be ordered. Mr. Sherman responded that chairs have been closed out on their end and Ms. Hallquist has all the paperwork to get that done. Selectman Kidder added that until they get a firm number on what everything will cost, then perhaps they need to wait on making any decisions. Mr. Sherman agrees but they need to proceed with a design in order to get those kinds of costs.

Selectman Helm stated the basic objective is to make the building suitable in terms of things that need to be done. At the same time, he is cognizant of the additional costs as they have risen past the estimates of a year ago. He feels it is highly unlikely they will want to spend an additional \$275,000 on this building. It is time to make some hard decisions and make recommendations to give direction to the committee on things to cut back on. The first suggestion is to eliminate the mechanical systems and he is not in favor of air conditioning. There are other things that are worth getting done and that should be the focus. He continues to be concerned about the table issue. At the last meeting, they were asked to come back with a trimmed down table budget and instead, it is exactly the same. Selectman Helm prepared a fourth alternative for consideration that was shared with his colleagues in order to give the committee direction. It includes a lower budget for furniture and includes all of the projects that were listed on their alternatives list except for the mechanical issues and things related to that. Selectman Helm stated this proposal presents a more realistic view of what they may eventually agree to. The proposal totals a little over \$500,000 but does not include storm windows. Selectman Helm stated he thinks it's time to come to the conclusion that we are not going to be able to do the entire \$875,000 project. It's not realistic in this environment.

Mr. Sherman noted the mechanical system has two components. One is the air conditioning and the other is fresh air. They have not addressed the noisy cabinet heaters in their budget. Selectman Helm responded he left \$90,000 in the budget to deal with air circulation and other issues. They cannot complete this project and not have dealt with storm windows. Frank Anzalone stated they did look at the storm windows and discovered they were installed backwards. The windows have bars on the top on the bottom to hold the glass in place and also to allow them to be opened and closed. They also add structure rigidity. The problem is that if they had installed them correctly they would hit the windows. In order to get them to work, you would have to cut that out and the storm windows would lose their rigidity so it's not an option. The storm windows don't add much by way of thermal protection and this was tested with an infrared camera. Selectman Helm responded even with this information he would like to have more discussion about how to deal with drafts through the windows. Mr. Anzalone stated if the walls are going to be insulated they should discuss keeping the fresh air system.

Mr. Sherman explained one of the options to deal with the noise from the cabinet heaters is to remove them and put in baseboard heating. This was not an option in the previous renovation because the walls were not insulated. There is currently some insulation in the attic but none in the walls. They can add

acoustic panels to the ceiling but it won't stop the noise from the units. Selectman Helm noted he has included insulation in his proposal. The only major thing he has taken out is the air conditioning/mechanical system. Mr. Sherman commented that the air conditioning and fresh air system could be done at a later time if needed.

Chair Rollins remarked there isn't a building or project right now that isn't costing a lot more than what was anticipated one or two years ago, largely due to supply demand issues and COVID. Any project we go forward with is going to be very difficult to guesstimate two years out. Chair Rollins stated she is willing to forgo air conditioning recognizing that down the road it could be added in however there are some things that absolutely need to get done. Selectman Kidder agreed and stated she is in favor of staying within the \$600,000 budget.

Chair Rollins stated there is a clear consensus to not have air conditioning at this time. The issue of the tables needs to be revisited as does the fresh air and insulation issue. Selectman Helm stated it sounds like there is agreement for the committee to come back with a \$600,000 plan that takes the air conditioning out. Mr. Sherman stated they would be willing to go back and do a review.

Update on Bog Project

Bob Brown, Chair of the Conservation Commission attended the meeting to provide an update on the Bog Project. At a meeting in December, phase 2 of the Cricenti Bog project was discussed and a proposal to withdraw \$48,000 from the Mary Haddad fund was requested to complete it. At that time there were some pending funding requests and those have since been received. Due to private funding efforts, they have raised over \$48,000. This is only 59% of what they need but this is still very good. They are now only having to request up to \$35,000 from the Mary Haddad fund. They will continue the fundraising efforts but need to get the materials ordered if they plan to have it installed by the second week of June.

The first section of aluminum walkway of the Cricenti bog was done last year. This proposal will continue the walkway out to Spruce loop. There has been an increase in usage of this trail and there have been reports of people falling. They are concentrating on the most difficult and rough terrain and installing a suitable safe walkway with a railing on one side.

Selectman Helm is in favor of this project. Chair Brown noted that the Recreation Commission and the Conservation Commission are also both in favor of the project.

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to accept the request from the Conservation Commission for the withdrawal of \$35,000 from the Mary Haddad fund to go towards the Philbrick-Cricenti bog project. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bob Bowers stated in February 2018, the Selectmen obtained an appraisal of the 7-acre Bewley property that is now under consideration for purchase by the town. That appraisal noted 3.3 acres of wetlands, 1.25 acres for an easement and also noted poorly drained soil which left an effective lot size of 2.0 acres. The appraisal for the entire parcel came in at \$70,000. The town records show that the town itself currently has an ad valorem value for this property of \$172,100 with a current use taxable value of \$316. In a non-public session on December 19, 2022 the Selectmen stated the asking price for the same parcel is \$375,000 and they believe this is a fair and reasonable price. In prior land purchases by the town, most specifically those put forth by the Conservation Commission, the Selectmen have obtained an appraisal of the property proposed to be purchased. In

fact, recently the Selectmen refused to move forward on 8.5 acres of land with an effective lot size of 4.0 acres to expand the DPW site because the asking price was \$130,000 and the town assessment was \$107,000. Mr. Bowers asked in the interest of full disclosure to the public, consistency and transparency in this matter, will the Selectman be obtaining a new appraisal of this lot and will it be the same appraiser that prepared the original appraisal. He feels it's important that it be the same appraiser that does it.

John Lewis, resident of New London shared that initially when he moved to the area 27 years ago he didn't get involved in town affairs. Since then, he believes the town has made some mistakes. He was a member of the former Building and Facilities Committee and his comments tonight relate to the proposed new Police Station. He was concerned back in 2018 about the proposal and now has concerns about the recent decision to look seriously at the land opposite the Post Office in New London. He believes Whipple Hall/Buker could be expanded for the Police. There is also the possibility of buying the house next door on Seaman's Road which should have been done. There are advantages to this location and the police department is relatively invisible. Putting the Police Station opposite the Post Office will contrast a lot with the town as it is and as it has been.

Chair Rollins stated the Police Site subcommittee has worked on this and looked at various potential sites.

Former Bewley Property on Newport Road and plans for public engagement

Selectman Helm shared that their focus is now on the 7 acre parcel on Newport Road. It is the site that was recommended by the Building and Facilities subcommittee as the #1 site for a potential police station. The Board of Selectmen have reached a tentative agreement with the owner to purchase just the 7 acres of land and they've asked their Engineers, Jones and Beach to do a conceptual plan. This plan shows how a 10,000 square foot, one story, police building would fit on that piece of land, along with the parking that is required by the zoning regulations. It is the intent of the Board of Selectmen to go forward to town meeting to purchase the land. They are not asking permission to build a building. They are trying to obtain the land so the effort can be taken to have a discussion about what a police station on that site might look like, how it would be designed and how the neighborhood could be protected from the construction. The objective at this point is simply to buy this piece of land.

In a discussion with the Energy commission, they have learned it may be possible to meet the town's goal of achieving net zero electric use by 2030 by combining the police station and solar arrays on this site to provide renewable power for the future.

Selectman Helm stated the goal tonight is to let everyone know this is the site they are looking at and have an agreement with the owner to purchase it for \$375,000. In response to Mr. Bower's comment earlier, they are in the process of obtaining an appraisal and it is from the same appraiser that did one in 2018. There is a lot of work to be done and information to be provided. There will be a schedule of events to engage the community in further discussions about this. He provided the Selectmen with the schedule of activities. Selectman Helm suggested running an ad in the shopper in order to attract the maximum audience of citizens from the town. He also suggested a meeting with residents of adjoining properties (Hilltop, Fenwood, and Great Pines) and discussing it at the Citizen's committee meeting.

Chair Rollins asked Selectman Helm who would be doing these presentations? Selectman Helm responded that this needs to be discussed. Chair Rollins asked if members of the Police Station subcommittee would be included and he responded that would seem appropriate since this was the land they recommended.

Bob Bowers stated he was on the Police station subcommittee and they did not recommend this piece as the primary recommendation. They said, after reviewing approximately 84 parcels of land there were two parcels that were suitable for meeting the needs that Chief Cobb had brought to the committee as to what would be a preferred site. There was a second site proposed so they were to take a look at both and make a decision as to which would be the preferable site. Before the Building and Facilities committee was able to proceed with that process, the Selectmen decided to disband that committee and the Selectmen would take over the task of looking into the issues and questions that the subcommittee had raised. That subcommittee report included an exhibit E that had 14 points that required further examination and discussion. The primary purpose was to make sure both sites were looked at in terms of cost and what would be a better position for a police station. Some factors involved were that the Bewley site was very wet, has great difficulties for site development and large cost of site development. The other site is a fully developed site with water, sewer and electricity. There are already 35 parking spaces and an existing building with roughly 75% of the square footage that is now being proposed. A lot of things need to be looked at including proper comparisons of the two sites before there is a recommendation made. What the Selectmen have done is that they are deciding in advance that they won't even look at the other site and look at this site and this site alone and that presents some difficulties. He wants to be clear that the committee did not say that this was the recommended primary site. There were two sites and the committee wanted them compared and due diligence done.

Selectman Helm responded that he disagrees with Mr. Bowers' interpretation of this. The Selectmen did not think that spending \$2 million dollars on the other property was preferable. They are only proposing to buy the land at this point as they can't do all the other things that the committee recommended without controlling the land. If this gets put off any longer, and this property get sold to someone else, they won't have the opportunity to have discussion about a police station within the next few years. They will also have the opportunity to talk about the possibility of creating a significant amount of renewable energy on property owned by the town.

Bob Bowers responded that \$2 million for a piece of property with a building and a developed site sounds high but it is a building with a developed site. You won't know what the final cost is until you look at all the issues. The problem is the Selectmen aren't looking at the facts or gathering information for analysis. You don't just go out and buy a piece of land because it is cheap, if it's not the right piece of land. You decide what is best first, and then proceed. It should be done right.

John Ellis asked what happens if the land is bought and then the town decides after analysis not to proceed. Kim Hallquist noted that the town could sell the land if they decide there is no town use for it. The purchase and sales agreement has a deposit but there will be a stipulation that if town meeting decides not to purchase it, we would get the deposit back.

Bill Partridge, a resident of Hilltop Place asked if any more engineering would be done prior to town meeting. Selectman Helm stated they may spend a little money to take a first pass at what it might look like to position a police station in different ways on this site. They won't be spend additional money on wetland studies beyond those that were done in 2018. Mr. Partridge stated so we won't

know if we can get a wetlands permit before the vote. Selectman Helm stated it is the opinion of the engineers that it won't be a problem. There was discussion about the driveway and concerns related to that.

Renata Kannler asked what happened to the two parcels off County Road. Selectman Helm stated at a meeting last month, they learned that the current owner, who agreed to sell all three parcels for \$600,000 has agreed to reconsider and sell just the one parcel. There is a potential buyer for the other two parcels.

Request of Treasurer Steve Theroux for appointment of Karen Bonewald as Deputy Treasurer

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the request of Treasurer Steve Theroux for appointment of Karen Bonewald as Deputy Treasurer. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Request of Board of Fireward for appointment of William Degnan

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the request of Board of Fireward for appointment of William Degnan. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Solar panels for Fire Department roof

Selectmen Helm stated at a recent meeting, Bob Bowers raised the question of why we hadn't considered installing solar panels on the fire department roof when it was redone. Selectman Helm discussed this with the Energy Commission and Jamie Hess attended the meeting tonight to share what would be involved in putting solar panels on the fire station roof.

Jamie Hess explained the fire station has a large roof and the building footprint is almost as large as the big highway garage on south Pleasant Street. Two and half years ago, they put a 50-kilowatt solar system consisting of over 200 panels that is now producing 1/8 of the electricity used by the town. By putting a similar amount on the roof of the fire station would convert another 1/8 of municipal electric use to solar renewable which would get us over halfway toward meeting our goal in the year 2030 of 100% renewable electricity.

In terms of cost, the estimate would be \$150,000. In the past they used outside investors but the economic climate has changed significantly in the last six months so it's worth considering owning the solar panels out right. Between the increase in electric rates and a direct pay rebate from the federal government, there has never been a better time to install solar. Mr. Hess stated Chief Lyon has expressed his support for solar in the past and would most likely want to have some input on how to go about this. The Energy Committee would be happy to work with him on this.

Colin Beasley asked about maintenance costs. Mr. Hess responded there are little to no maintenance costs.

Future Use of Buker Committee work

Selectman Kidder stated the committee met several times and discussed options for the future use of Buker but realized there would probably not be anything done with Buker for several years. Goals and ideas may change significantly by then but some of them were renting out the former court area, storage of tables of chairs, secured storage for voting materials, a community center, recreation department, emergency management, welfare offices and other space for town boards, committees and commissions,

childcare facility, swap shop, eventual offices for land use, planning, zoning and accessing. The committee felt that citizens of the town should be surveyed as to what they would like to see happen with Buker if the Police Department moves out. Private use for business incubation ventures was also discussed.

John Lewis noted that he did not feel that the space would be good for a community center, the building is too chopped up, a community center needs big wide open space. Mr. Lewis stressed that he felt that it is important for the town to have a community center and he has advocated for one for several years.

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Kim Hallquist reported the following:

- There was water damage to the town offices when a pipe in a toilet burst in the upstairs bathroom. The water was quickly shut off and Serv Pro was brought in to dry out the area. No extensive damage was done but they will look into filing an insurance claim.
- \$80,709.67 was received from the state as a one-time payment that must be used for bridges.
- A list of New London citizens who have passed away this past year was distributed. A list of people should be decided on to dedicate the town report to this year.
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS & REPORTS

Selectman Helm reported that the Budget Committee continues their meetings, and they will meet next Wednesday to vote on the budget that will go forward to town meeting.

The Waste Reduction committee continues to meet every few weeks and will come to the Board of Selectmen meeting on January 26, 2023, to give a report and ask for consideration of funds on the warrant at town meeting. There is now 1.3 tons of compost that has been collected in the past eleven weeks.

MEETING MINUTES: Approve the Selectmen's Minutes

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to accept the minutes of the October 27, 2022 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED. Chair Rollins recused herself from the vote.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to accept the minutes of the November 3, 2022 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to accept the minutes of the November 9, 2022 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to accept the minutes of the November 10, 2022 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to accept the minutes of the November 15, 2022 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to accept the minutes of the November 18, 2022 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to accept the minutes of the November 22, 2022 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to accept the minutes of the December 15, 2022 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED. Chair Rollins recused herself from the vote.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to accept the minutes of the December 19, 2022 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS

- Next Regular Selectmen's meeting – January 12th – Kearsarge Prof Dev. Center, 165 Main St
- Recreation Commission – Thursday, January 5th - 5:30 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- Planning Board, Tuesday, January 10th – 6:30 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- Budget Committee – Wednesday, January 11th – 6:30 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- **Town Offices Closed – Monday, January 16th – Martin Luther King, Jr Day**
- Conservation Commission – Wednesday, January 18th – 8:30 AM – Whipple Town Hall

OTHER BUSINESS: None

APPROVAL OF PAY VOUCHERS, PERMITS etc.

Items to be signed:

- Appointment Cards & Letters (Karen Bonewald, William Degnan)
- Town Use (Center for the Arts, 2)
- Event Raffle Application
- Birthday Cards
- Tax Credit/Exemption (9)

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:51PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Trina Dawson
Recording Secretary
Town of New London