



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Whipple Memorial Hall

4:30 PM

PRESENT:

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Emily Cobb, Police Chief
Anthony DiLuzio, Colliers Project Leaders
Bob Harrington, Public Works Director
Tim Paradis, Planning Board Chair
Adam Ricker, Town Planner
Will Kidder, Town Clerk -Tax Collector
Phil Sherman, New London resident
Joe Cardillo, New London resident
Bob Bowers, New London resident
Bob Lyon, New London resident
Peter Bianchi, New London resident
John Ellis, New London resident
Vahan Sarkisian, New London resident
Sherry Williams, Tracy Library Trustee

Selectman Kidder called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

Public Hearing: The acceptance of a grant in the amount of \$413,000 from the US Department of Justice Office of Community Policing Services. Grant funds will be used for the purchase of a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Record Management System (RMS) for the New London Police Department.

New London Police Chief Emily Cobb stated about two and half years ago she started looking for a new Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Record Management System (RMS) for the Police Department and Communications Center. These types of programs are generally very costly and Chief Cobb researched several programs and also consulted with other Police Departments to understand what they use. She was then made aware of this grant opportunity, applied for it and received it in the amount of \$413,000. This will not only benefit New London, but also all of the other towns they dispatch for.

Chief Cobb is hoping to go live by the end of February as training will be needed. The ongoing cost will include annual maintenance fees and cloud storage fees and these will be incorporated into the operating

budget. The amount for ongoing fees is \$56,820. Some portion of this will be realized as revenue from other towns that we dispatch for.

Chair Kidder asked if there were questions or comments from the public. There were none.

Chair Kidder closed the public hearing.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to accept the grant in the amount of \$413,000. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Police and Communications Facility

Anthony DiLuzio, Colliers Project Leaders, attended the meeting and explained that his job is to manage police and fire station projects at the municipal and state level. The company's project management team is headquartered out of Madison Connecticut which includes 350 individual project managers, architects and engineers that service their projects. They help building committees and municipalities put together requests for proposals, requests for qualifications, architectural services and construction services. They specialize in coordination of the technical aspects of projects such as radio communications, dispatch and all the engineering disciplines that go into the development of these projects. Mr. DiLuzio has submitted examples to the board of previous projects that he believes represent the project scope and magnitude that New London would be looking at. There is a proposal for some upfront services which would help identify three or four sites, categorize them and put them in a hierarchy as to which would be most beneficial. Concurrently, a proposal would be put forth for architectural services. That service would come in and work more closely with the community and the police department to develop square footage, dispatch areas and storage to make sure areas are safe and private for occupants and the public. A budget is put together to provide not only a total site and design cost but also a timeline of when the funds are going to be spent. Mr. DiLuzio stated he would be the representative for the town that would manage all aspects of the project. He would utilize a spreadsheet that includes timelines and if the goal is to get to a spring town meeting this would help us understand what needs to be done to get there. From that town meeting, the next step would be to figure out what the next phase would look like.

The basic timeline would be site selection, concept design through March and if that is successful, the design phase of the project would probably take until the end of 2024. Three to four months is needed to line up subcontractors and general contractors and then the construction phase. They have put together the initial concept for about \$40,000 and this will get through until the next town meeting. This will give a complete overview of what work has been done and what work is scheduled in the next phase and the cost associated with that.

Bob Bowers stated he is confused as to why this proposal from Colliers Project Leaders is being considered. It proposes hiring a consultant for \$40,000 to do no more than to help the Selectmen pick a piece of land and pick a designer for a possible new police station. Other phases follow but this is the cost for the first step. The town formed a committee to advise the Selectmen on possible parcels for this purpose. This committee was chaired by Chief Cobb and had among its seven members, Lieutenant David Keith, a member of the planning board, three members of the building committee, and a citizen representative. It met 9 times and considered 32 parcels as potentially workable for the purpose. In March 2022, the committee put forth for the Selectmen's consideration two parcels and a secondary parcel. The report noted that each of these parcels would require much deeper and thorough analysis. The Bewley parcel was overwhelmingly rejected by voters at town meeting this past March. Since that time the Selectmen have done nothing of significance to analyze the pros and cons of the Brume parcel, nor have the Selectmen provided residents with an assessment of the cost of renovating the existing

building to meet the needs of the Police Department. At the Selectmen's work session on August 30, 2023, the Selectmen proposed additional sites, including the McEnrue property abutting the current police station. The proposed contract under consideration does not include a complete and detailed report on the issues the committee stated needed resolution or the actual needs of the Police Department that could or could not be addressed at the existing site. A significant segment of residents of New London do not believe a new police station should be built at a new location. Rather than one more study, residents want a clear explanation as to why a new police station is needed at a new location. A precise, clear, fact-based and analytical report by the selectmen and signed by them on both a new site and building and for the existing site and building is needed so they can understand and compare the work proposed and cost for each. That report should also include the cost of renovation, repairs and all other costs of converting the Buker building to new and different uses and purposes if the police station is moved. Residents need and will appreciate a report from the Selectmen setting forth this information and the Selectmen's reason for concluding that a new station at a new site is the only solution for the town.

Chair Kidder stated the point of hiring Colliers is so they can answer a number of the questions that have been pointed out. In the past, whenever a proposal has been brought forth based on the fact that the police department does not feel their space is adequate or safe, they've been told they should have a design and all the costs involved presented to the public. This is what they are trying to accomplish. The bottom line is that police department does not feel that they are in a space that adequately serves them and the town of New London.

Bob Lyon asked Mr. DiLuzio if it was proposed to him as part of this process that he would need to evaluate the current police station for possible renovation. Mr. DiLuzio responded it is a piece of the study that will be performed by an architect. There will be a formal code review of the existing building and its operational ability. It the first part of the study they look at the existing station and its deficiencies and determine if they can be fixed in the existing structure. Mr. Lyon stated he was surprised to hear that the Police Department has already decided that the current site is insufficient. This is contrary to what the consultant is being asked to do so why would they waste time looking into renovating it? Mr. DiLuzio responded they will start by looking at what the current building doesn't support and the next phase will be to determine what it would take to make this facility meet these accommodations. Selectman Kidder shared they have looked at this for a long time and other studies have been done. They do not feel the current site is the correct site for the police station. Mr. Lyon asked then why would we spend the money to have him look at it and it should be taken out of the budget. He is fiscally conservative, why spend money on something that has already been decided? This would be a waste of time to look at it.

Selectman Casey asked Mr. DiLuzio if he would be able to deliver a report based on Mr. Bowers comments. Mr. DiLuzio responded yes. Selectman Casey asked him when he has done this in the past, is it the norm to look at the existing facility to determine their options. Mr. DiLuzio responded yes; it is. They need to look at what is there today and how it is functioning or not functioning. Mr. DiLuzio stated he will review the previous reports on the current facility and different sites as he starts this process. Chief Cobb commented she has shared with Mr. DiLuzio that several studies and reports have been done and she can certainly send him the links to everything on the website to make it easier for him to find.

Selectman Helm stated in the past he hasn't always felt the need for good project management. Whipple Hall is a good example of what good project management can do for us. The key thing is that Mr. DiLuzio will be the project manager and this is what many people have asked for which is an independent, experienced project manager to represent the town of New London. He applauds Chief Cobb for finding Colliers Project Leaders and Mr. DiLuzio for what he is proposing to do. He did add that finding a site in New London is not quite as easy as in other places. Contrary to what Mr. Bowers said, the rejection of the Bewley property was done by the Selectmen, not by the town. This was rejected

because the seller wanted a price greater than the assessed value. The value of property in New London is very high and finding a price that is acceptable to the town that doesn't exceed what independent properties say the property is worth is creating issues. Selectmen Helm asked if Colliers is not able to find an acceptable site, will they let the selectmen know they can't continue? Mr. DiLuzio responded if they are moving forward after tonight, he would start on two parallel tracks. One is the site selection matrix and second is review of the existing information. They need to make sure that any site they are looking at can support all site issues. They will document everything so when it is presented to the town, it is a single document that manages the data and tells a story about the property. This will make it easier to make a decision on selecting a site. Selectman Helm stated he is in favor of this proposal.

Colin Beasley asked what gets done in phase one. Mr. DiLuzio responded phase one is site selection matrix and a site plan with a full program that describes the floor plan based on square footage, schedule and budget. This will all be done in the next two and a half months.

Mr. Beasley stated with regards to the digitization project, he was informed during a capital reserves discussion that the town doesn't have the resources to manage the consultant that would be hired for that project that was approved two years ago. He's wondering who is going to manage this project when we can't project manage a consultant that was approved two years ago. Chair Kidder stated when looking at digitization and what it entails for staff to do, it hasn't risen to the top as a priority such as the police station or sidewalks. She understands that he thinks it is important but if anyone is looking for old records, they have the ability to find them. Mr. Beasley responded he isn't looking for old records, he is looking at the process of how we are managing voted on items from the point of view of budgets and how they are being addressed by the town. If there aren't resources to perform the work that has been voted on at a town meeting then we should figure out how to allocate those resources to get that work done. This project hasn't been voted on at all but we're finding the resources to do it. We have things that the town has said yes to and have appropriated the money yet we aren't doing them. Then we have this project and are finding the money and will project manage it.

Chair Kidder responded that she has heard over the years that we need a new police station and people are asking why we are still looking at this. In 2018, the conclusion of the Board of Selectmen unanimously said we need to find a new police station and need to start this process. Mr. Beasley commented that there are people who say we do and people who say we don't need it. Perhaps the right vote in March is do we want one or not? Start with giving the citizens of the town the right to vote on the Police Station. Chair Kidder stated there is a master plan that indicates people are in favor of it and in a number of meetings it was favorable that people want to move the police station and appreciate the work that is done.

Peter Bianchi asked if there was an estimated overall cost. Mr. DiLuzio responded he would estimate that it would be in the \$600-\$800 per square foot range, but this excludes the land. Mr. Bianchi clarified that the \$40,000 would come out of this year's budget and would be spent prior to town meeting. Selectman Helm responded that all the money available for this year has been appropriated but they will find \$40,000. Mr. Bianchi stated this has been studied many times. To reinvent the wheel now with an unknown total cost before citizens can weigh in on whether we need it is going over what has already been covered. It would be a waste of time and is not necessary. The town of New London has always been supportive of the police department but he is against spending the \$40,000 now. It should be postponed until there is a definitive opinion from citizens at a town meeting.

John Ellis asked about the five-step process that will be followed and asked when each of those five steps are finished is information communicated back to the Selectmen. Mr. DiLuzio responded it is up to the Selectmen how they would like information communicated. If they want monthly updates that would be

fine. Mr. Ellis asked if the information would be made public. The Selectmen responded yes and they would like this to be as transparent as possible.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to accept the proposal from Colliers to do the initial phases of a study for a new police and communications center for New London. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Vahan Sarkisian stated he is confused about the need for another study. As a board they appointed a committee of citizens that has already studied the possible buildings in town. Their recommendation was to renovate the existing building and possibly buy the house next door. Mr. Sarkisian feels it would be best for this consultant to study what we already have to determine if we need a new one or what can we do to make the existing police station work to make the Chief and the citizens of New London happy without spending millions of dollars.

Town Building Asset Management Plan

Phil Sherman met with the Board to discuss his recommendation for an asset management plan for town buildings. He began by informing the Selectmen that the radiators are in earlier than expected and there is still some basement piping that needs to get done. That will be scheduled to get done next week.

Mr. Sherman observed that for many years work has been done to put more order to the maintenance and financial planning involving town owned buildings. Currently, some ongoing maintenance is being done by town employees and some by contractors and the need for many buildings element replacement and repair frequently only look to the next budget cycle. Mr. Sherman gave credit to the town volunteers and staff that created the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP indicates that facility maintenance and improvements are included in the plan but then generally sets a \$50,000 threshold for inclusion. Things that are included are roof work, generator heating system replacement costs, expansion of the Fire Department, reorganization of the Academy Building and construction of a new police station. What is not included are the majority of items that fall under the \$50,000 threshold. Doors wear out, painting and refinishing needs arise, trim, siding and gutters and fire alarm systems all have a lifespan. The town has approximately 30 buildings with 10 of them being primary structures. Sewer pump stations, beach restrooms, sand sheds etc. are important to the mission of the town, and small building can create a budget need that is far from trivial. Mr. Sherman is recommending that the Selectmen spend a portion of the funds immediately under this budget year with the hope that the funds included for building maintenance for next year's budget be put where they best belong. Many software vendors have been interviewed and the desired approach is to use a simple program called iWorQ for day-to-day maintenance. This program is best suited for our needs and also happens to be the least expensive. Completing this work now is warranted based on a long-standing need to better understand where the building maintenance and improvement dollars should be assigned.

Selectman Helm responded that right now the selectmen have not shown any indication of wanting to bring common day to day maintenance items across all the departments into one budget. He's not sure having a study done that won't be done by town meeting and won't impact the 2025 budget makes sense. Long term, he is in favor of doing this but is not understanding the reason for doing it before July 1. Mr. Sherman stated that waiting just backs up the time in which you have better information to make some decisions.

Request to fill vacancy on Board of Trustees

Sherry Williams stated Sarah Scheuch resigned from the board on October 18, 2023. To fill this vacancy until the next election, the library board of trustees recommends that the board of Selectmen appoint Tom Carly. He is currently an alternate and has agreed to serve.

IT WAS MOVED (Bebe Casey) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to appoint Tom Carly as library trustee. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Joe Cardillo stated the project manager from Colliers talked about who would be on the committee for the police station project. Mr. Cardillo pointed out that in other towns he has seen the building and facilities committee get involved. It will obviously include the Selectmen and town administrator. Since our building and facilities committee has been disbanded, who else are they considering to be involved or is there any intent to add anyone else to give input? Chair Kidder stated it is important to have a committee and they certainly want people who have a background in policing as that would be valuable. The one major point would be that committee members are in favor of a new police station. It shouldn't be a committee comprised of people who are against it. Mr. Cardillo stated the most important piece is that all the information is coming through. His takeaway is very different than Selectmen Helm's takeaway with respect to the last town vote. It wasn't so much that the appraisal didn't come in correctly. That vote at town meeting told him that the citizens of this town really value services in the middle of town. He wants to ensure all options are looked at.

Body Camera Funding – Grant portion: \$49,560 – town portion \$56,960

Police Chief Emily Cobb shared she came before the board regarding the body and dash board camera grant a few months ago. The grant was for 50% of the cost up to \$50,000. She applied for the grant and it was awarded. The body and dash cameras are operational and are a great success. The grant portion comes to \$49,560 and the town portion is \$56,960. This is not in the current budget. Chair Kidder stated there is still \$200,000 in the ARPA funds and this would be a legitimate expense for that.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to approve \$56,960 of ARPA funds for body camera funding. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Presentation of Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

Town Planner Adam Ricker provided an overview of the adoption and design of the CIP. The CIP committee met five times and was comprised of Planning Board members Tim Paradis, David Royle, Paul Vance, Paul Gorman, and Bill Helm and Budget Committee member Charlie Kelsey. Meetings are held with department heads and data is supplied to the committee and projects and needs are discussed.

The CIP is not a funding source so the merits of the projects are debated through the funding portion of the Budget Committees review and the Selectmen's review. It is the obligation of those two groups to decide what goes into the annual budget. This year the threshold was set at \$50,000 for a capital project with a few exceptions.

Mr. Ricker discussed a previous project that involved a study that would look at Main Street (urban design, pedestrian access, vehicular access) but unfortunately when that was being discussed the cost for consultants changed dramatically and it was unreasonable. There was also a shift in priorities. The Housing Commission has applied for a grant and some of the facets of this project could provide information that could potentially be used in the Main Street study.

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

- Kim Hallquist stated they are working hard with DRA to obtain the 2023 tax rate. They have all the information they need from the town so hope to get that as soon as possible.
- Portions of Main Street will be closed on Sunday from 4:00-6:00pm for the Halloween trick-or-treating event. Ms. Hallquist thanked Chief Cobb and Chief Lyon as they put in a lot of work to plan for the safety aspects of this event. Chief Cobb shared that the closure on Main Street is from Seamans Road down to the Barn Playhouse. After 6:00pm, Chief Lyon and Chief Cobb will reallocate their resources from the closure to other events: the Monster Bash and the Spooky Walk. The event is larger and longer than it has been in the past and has required a significant amount of planning. There are also many people that have volunteered to help.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS & REPORTS

Planning Board – Selectman Helm reported the Planning Board met on Tuesday and approved a tree cutting in the stream conservation overlay district and heard a preliminary site plan review for a new commercial building on 10 Main Street. They also discussed several possible zoning amendment changes for town meeting in March.

Waste Reduction Committee – Public Works Director Bob Harrington stated he attended the Waste Reduction Committee meeting and met with a representative from Hannaford. They are working to try to change packaging and do more recycling.

Selectman Helm shared that the Selectmen are also sewer commissioners for the town and had a monthly meeting with Sunapee last week to go over the budget. The wastewater treatment plant in Sunapee is a separate budget entity and the Selectmen were able to reduce it by several thousand dollars. They also suggested looking into ground mounted solar with regards to electricity.

Chair Kidder stated there was a tri-town assessors meeting this morning. Kris McAllister has completed the reassessment for the town of New London, and everyone should have gotten information regarding what the new valuation is of their property.

PRIORITIES

MEETING MINUTES: - Approve Selectmen's Minutes of October 5, 2023

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to accept the work session minutes of the October 5, 2023 meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

APPROVAL OF PAY VOUCHERS, PERMITS etc.

Items to be signed:

- Payroll Authorization Vouchers (3 of them)
- NH Department of Energy

- Katherine Bidlack – New London Hospital Association – Hospital Days- Town Common & Bandstand and Little Common July 31,2024 through August 5,2024 for All day
- Marion Murray – Miss State Parks Scholarship Program – Miss State Parks Competition – Whipple Town Hall and Conference Room on June 15,2024 from 8:00am-7:00pm
- M.Wanda Daughty – New London Garden Club – New London Garden Club Tour – Town Common & Bandstand on June 20,2024 from 8:30am-3:00PM

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to enter into a nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a): the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee.

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

The Board entered nonpublic session at 6:20 PM.

The Board reentered the public session at 7:11 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 (Bebe Casey) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Trina Dawson
Recording Secretary
Town of New London