



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, October 27, 2022

Whipple Hall

6:00 PM

PRESENT:

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

ABSENT:

Nancy Rollins, Chairman

ALSO PRESENT:

Bob Harrington, Public Works Director
Crystal Schimpf, Tracy Library Director
Eula Kozma, Library Trustee
Jay Lyon, Fire Chief
Bob Brown, Conservation Commission Chair
Peter Nichols, Housing Commission Chair
Frank Anzalone, Whipple Hall Project
Persis Wirkkala, New London resident
Russ Moore, New London Bike Walk Coalition

Will Kidder, Town Clerk - Tax Collector
Sherry Williams, Library Trustee
Sara Scheuch, Library Trustee
Putnam Kidder, Recreation Director
John Ellis, New London resident
Bob Bowers, New London resident
Maureen Prohl, Waste Reduction Committee
Mike Wirkkala, New London resident

Budget Committee: Joe Cardillo, Lou Botta, Colin Beasley, John Wilson, Chris Lorio, Mark Christensen, Lyndsay Harkins, Hannah Bianchi

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

Appointments

Metal Detecting on Town Property

Persis and Mike Wirkkala attended the meeting to discuss metal detecting on town property. Mr. Wirkkala explained that he and Persis are professional metal detectors and have logged over 3,500 hours detecting over the past 3-4 years. They take pride in the work they do and have not had any issues with complaints with regards to damage to property. They have done the two fields at the SAU and they are asking for permission to metal detect in front of town hall and the town green. If they were to find anything of historical significance they would donate it to the historical society or return it to the owner.

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist stated she is not aware of how other towns handle a request like this. While seeing metal detectors on beaches is common, she is unsure about town property. She

stated the Selectmen need to be aware that if they allow it in this case, there may be other groups that will ask as well.

Selectman Kidder asked how long it takes to do a field the size of the town green. Mr. Wirkkala stated it depends and they try to respect the owner's rights. If they don't want them there for long that's fine but usually at least a day or two as they tend to be very thorough. Selectman Kidder asked if they have insurance and they responded no, but if something happened they would certainly pay for damages. Selectman Kidder shared that she is not comfortable with this as it seems to be inappropriate activity on the town common.

Selectman Helm agreed with Selectman Kidder and is also reluctant as it would have people wondering what is going on at the town green. Also, since Chair Rollins is absent tonight, he would like to defer it until they have a full board and suggested they come back in the spring.

FY2024 Budget Review: Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Personnel Admin, Library, Recreation, Conservation, Housing, Archives, Energy, Patriotic Purposes, New London Bike Walk Coalition, CRF, Bonded Debt, CIP

Colin Beasley asked if the Selectmen are making a list of items and making recommendations for changes at the end of the session or should the Budget Committee assume that every budget is being accepted as proposed? Selectman Helm stated they are making notes of the issues so there is an overall picture of what the issues might be for the budget. Chair Rollins has been absent but when she returns she will have the opportunity to review all of it and they can deliberate on what they will accept and what they'd like to change.

Town Clerk - Will Kidder requested an increase of \$425 for an annual conference.

Tax Collector – Mr. Kidder requested an increase of \$250 for printing, stationary and mailing of tax bills.

Elections – Mr. Kidder discussed the position of Moderator and encouraged the consideration of an increase related to the annual stipend. He noted that Michael Todd spends a lot of time and he is good at what he does.

Mr. Kidder is requesting the purchase of poll pads. These are used at check in lines and allows them to check people in more efficiently. It will also increase accuracy and creates post-election reports. This has already been approved by the Secretary of State and they think it's a great idea and would love to see us get on board with it. Mr. Kidder would like to have them for the Presidential Election in 2024 so if we do it now we would have it by the fall of 2023. This will allow them to run the best election possible. Training of volunteers and staff is included when purchasing poll pads and the total cost is \$10,700.

Personnel Admin – Kim Hallquist shared that the first four line items are for the library and the library reimburses the town for those costs. She stated that the tuition reimbursement has line item has been reduced to \$500 as this hasn't been used in several years.

Library – Crystal Schimpf provided a breakdown of the library budget. She shared it takes 3.5 full time employees to keep the library open for the minimum staffing level for the 42 hours per week

they are open to the public. There is also time spent in the management of the library. Another area that is high and is increasing is the maintenance of the library. This is due to inflation and in some cases they had under budgeted for the needs of the library in some areas. The building is from 1823 so not only are there larger projects on the horizon but they also have a lot of maintenance to keep up with the building itself. They are trying to plan ahead accordingly. The Trustee expense is also up as the library board of trustee's plans to begin the strategic planning process in the current fiscal year and carry it into the next fiscal year. This process is critical and it is important to take that planning on in order to truly understand and meet the needs of the community.

Recreation – Putnam Kidder, part time Recreation Director, presented the Recreation budget. He reported one of the biggest changes is to increase waterfront wages for staff. This totals \$6,000. It is important that they are able to compete with other wages in the area so they can retain qualified staff. The line item for recording secretary was reduced to zero as the Recreation Director has chosen to take the meeting minutes himself. The money saved from that will go towards advertising. An increase for conferences and training includes in- service training for staff for the safe operations of the beaches. Consistent training helps the staff to become more comfortable and confident when doing their job.

Mr. Kidder stated since the decision was made to hire a full-time recreation director, the money that was in the activity fund will now go towards the director's salary.

New London Bike Walk Coalition – Selectman Helm introduced Russ Moore and stated this is a new request so is not in the budget packet. Mr. Moore shared that the first part of his request is for bike racks located at the town offices, Elkins beach and Bucklin beach. The Recreation Commission unanimously recommended replacing the bike racks at the two beaches. The request was previously brought before the Selectmen but he was told at that time it was not possible to fund this during this fiscal year. What they want to install are bike racks that can be secured and anchored to the ground and each rack would accommodate eight bikes. The second request is for an engineering study in the amount of \$12,000 that would be done through the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission to create the mechanism for them to move forward with the downtown business bike loop. This is a proposal where they would promote access to Main Street and Main Street businesses by bike and by pedestrians using some alternate routes that parallel Main Street. This project would occur in three phases. The New London Bike Walk Coalition is committed to researching and securing grants in collaboration with the town and other entities for the study. Extensive studies have been done to show the benefits of these projects in other towns.

Patriotic Purposes – This line item in the amount of \$300 has not been spent in many years but Kim Hallquist recommends keeping it in there.

Archives – Jim Perkins was not in attendance, however, Kim Hallquist reported that last year, phase one of the shelving project was started for archives. The increase for this year is for the second phase of the project.

Conservation – Bob Brown, Chair of the Conservation Commission stated that typically, the Conservation Commission's operating budget is in the 18,000 -19,000 range. This covers the recording secretary and maintenance of the 32 miles of hiking trails (material costs and labor). This year they are asking for a 9% increase due to the rise in cost of materials.

Energy – There was no increase in this budget.

Housing – Peter Nichols, Chair of the Housing Commission shared that some regulatory suggestions will go before the voters at town meeting in March, 2023. This budget is for continuation of working with a consultant that will help them take that platform earned from the vote in 2023 and keep moving it forward.

Care of Trees – Kim Hallquist shared that our tree warden is Dave Carey and this line item is for pruning and caring of trees.

Lyndsay Harkins stated that she reviewed the agenda from last year and noticed that Sunapee's request for funding for their lake association had increased and questioned how the amount billed to each town is determined. Kim Hallquist stated that a representative will be invited to the Budget Committee meeting when this is reviewed. Ms. Hallquist reported that the Executive Director stated it is based on the waterfront value of the properties.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) – Selectman Helm shared that the Board of Selectmen have officially received the CIP document from the Planning Board. Since Chair Rollins is absent, it was suggested to wait and review it as a full board.

Bonded Debt- Principal & Interest – Finance Officer, Lynn Lewis reported that not much has changed since last year. She has not gone out for bond for Whipple Building Project but all of the other debt is the same. She has not included any requests for the land acquisition. This includes only debt that is already incurred and appropriated for.

Tax Anticipated Notes (TAN) – This is a \$1 placeholder in the event there was ever a need to borrow money in anticipation of tax revenue that was not received.

Capital Reserve Funds (CRF) - Capital Outlay & Transfers to CRF– Selectman Helm stated that transfers to Capital Reserves total close to \$1 million dollars. He would like to propose that for the fiscal 2024 budget cycle, all of those projected transfers be reduced by 50%. This would reduce the amount of money that would be transferred to capital reserves to \$500,000. The reason for this is that the increased cost of wages, compensation and benefits for employees is going to be significant along with some other requests for additional spending in various departments. While capital reserves are important, it has been a while since the town has taken a look at the process for determining the appropriate level of capital reserves. Selectman Helm feels it is important to take care of employees first. The cost of turnover is expensive so this should be a priority. Selectman Kidder feels this is a good proposal and we should be going through all of the items as there are some that may be able to be eliminated altogether.

Ms. Hallquist explained that Capital Reserves are essentially town savings accounts. They are funds that are appropriated by Town Meeting and they go into specific accounts for that purpose only. The funds are held by the Trustee of Trust Funds so when town meeting either votes to spend some of the money or if the Selectmen decide (as agents to expend) to spend the money it can only be spent for the purpose of the capital reserve fund.

John Wilson stated he would like to consider going a little further and reducing the transfers by the full \$1 million dollars. It will give more leeway in handling the pay and benefits aspect of things. He stated in 2008 this is what they did and does not believe it caused a major upset.

Colin Beasley asked Kim Hallquist to provide the current value of all the reserve funds. He would like to have this in advance so it can be analyzed as this is important data.

PUBLIC COMMENT

John Ellis asked for an update on the Bunker Speed sign project. Finance Officer Lynn Lewis responded she is waiting for donations to come in as she has only gotten one so far.

Mr. Ellis stated at the October 21, 2022 Board of Selectmen meeting there was an Engineer from Jones and Beach engineering that was familiar with the Bewley property. He asked if this engineer will review the other properties that were originally listed for consideration. Selectman Helm responded that in a recent meeting, the Selectmen voted to proceed with looking specifically at the 11+ acres that they have agreed to try to purchase from Continuum. The effort for the engineer is focused on this site as it is the site agreed upon for the police station. This proposal for review will be completed when they have provided all of the information that they agreed to provide as part of the contract.

Update from Waste Reduction Committee

Maureen Prohl attended the meeting to provide an update on the Waste Reduction Committee. She reported the composting pilot program started last Friday. They selected 20 households out of the 33 households that applied for the program. For the households that were not selected, information on resources available for residential pick up was provided to them. Each of the 20 households received a large five-gallon bucket, bags for them to use and a list of what can and cannot be put in the bucket. The composting bags get picked up once per week by a compost dedicated company out of Manchester, New Hampshire. She has gotten positive feedback from the people involved in the project.

Other project in the pipeline are plastic and Styrofoam collection. They are looking into interviewing restaurants to encourage them in ways to reduce plastic in restaurants in town. A primary goal they will be approaching very soon is education of the town residents. They want to develop handouts and have mini classes on waste reduction in town.

Bob Harrington thanked Maureen Prohl for her work on this. Selectmen Helm agreed and stated the entire committee is fantastic to work with.

2022 Whipple Hall Project Committee: recommendation for construction manager

Frank Anzalone and Colin Beasley attended the meeting to discuss their recommendation for a construction manager. Mr. Beasley stated a memo was sent to the Selectmen to request approval for the allocation of funds for a construction manager. Frank Anzalone stated this person will be responsible for scheduling and cost estimating to determine what the costs will be and what parts of the work will get done. Selectmen Helm responded that he is in favor of this as it will be a first step of getting control on understanding what the spending will be.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to accept the recommendation of the Whipple Hall Project Committee. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Consider supporting RPC application to apply for a Navigator Grant with Sunapee, Wilmot and Newbury as supported by the Housing Commission

Peter Nichols, Chairman of the Housing Commission attended the meeting to discuss a \$250,000 Navigator Grant coming from the New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority. The funds are to help a group of towns in one area enhance their ability to do community engagement. The towns included in this group are Sunapee, New London, Wilmot and Newbury. This would not be a duplicate effort with our current consultant, Mark Fougere who is assisting with regulatory changes. It will also allow us to learn what other towns around us are doing. The Regional Planning Commission will hire this individual for a two-year term but will be a proposed permanent hire of the commission. The Housing Commission is in support of this and recommends approval of New London's participation in this Navigator grant.

Selectman Kidder responded that the Housing Commission has done an amazing amount of work and she is in support if this is a way of coordinating what is happening in other towns and provides direction for us. Selectman Helm is also in favor.

IT WAS MOVED (Bill Helm) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the town of New London's support in the RPC application to apply for a Navigator grant. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Public Works request for funds to purchase meter reading equipment for sewer billing

Public Works Director Bob Harrington stated he would like to request funds for a meter reader for the sewer department. They currently depend on the New London-Springfield Water Precinct to do their readings for roughly 750 users. The reader gun they have is outdated and it cannot be upgraded to the current system that the water department has. The information has to be entered manually and leaves room for error. This would also give them control as they are currently dependent on the water department to get the readings. The cost would be approximately \$20,000. The reader gun is essentially a scanning tool and is a rechargeable unit. Information can be download to the computer which helps to avoid errors. Funding will come from either the sewer department or the ARPA funds that have already been dedicated to the department. There would also be a \$3,600 support fee each year that will need to be budgeted going forward.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to purchase meter reading equipment for the sewer department. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Acceptance of gift of a watercolor painting of the Academy Building by Kirk Ramsey (see page 12 of 2020 Town Report)

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist reported that the artist contacted the Selectmen's Office to ask if the town would like to have the original watercolor painting. The Selectmen have the authority to accept gifts on behalf of the town.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to accept the watercolor painting of the Academy Building done by Kirk Ramsey. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Discuss meeting with Energy Committee to explore solar and/other energy issues that may apply to potential new police station site

Selectman Helm stated he was in contact with Jamie Hess, Chairman of the Energy Committee, to see if they would be willing to entertain meeting to discuss the idea of solar and other energy issues for the potential new police station site. Mr. Hess agreed and Selectman Helm will attend a meeting next Tuesday on behalf of the Selectmen.

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Kim Hallquist noted the next big event coming up is Halloween. She reported that portions of Main Street will be shut down between 4:00 – 6:00pm. Putnam Kidder and the Recreation Commission have done a great job of getting help including firefighters, police officers and volunteers. There was a candy drive to help supply people with candy in that area.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS & REPORTS

Planning Board – Selectman Kidder reported that a Planning Board meeting was held on October 25, 2022. They heard the preliminary site plan for Twin Pines Housing with regard to the Cricenti property behind the shopping center. It was a well-attended meeting. Peter Christians also applied for a generator and to convert the gift shop into a small bar.

MEETING MINUTES: Approve the Selectmen’s Minutes of September 22nd, 29th and October 21st

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bill Helm) to accept the minutes of the September 8, 2022, September 22, 2022, September 29, 2022 and October 21, 2022 meetings. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS

- Next Regular Selectmen’s meeting – Thursday, November 10th - 6:00 PM
- Selectmen’s Budget Review – Thursday, November 3rd – 6:30 PM
- Energy Committee – Wednesday, November 2nd – 7:00 PM @Syd Crook
- Waste Reduction Committee – Thursday, November 3rd – 10:00 AM – Syd Crook
- Recreation Commission – Thursday, November 3rd – 5:30 PM @ Whipple Hall Conference Rm
- Citizens Committee – Saturday, November 5th – 7:30 AM
- **State General Election – Tuesday, November 8th – 7AM-7PM, Whipple Town Hall**
- Planning Board – Tuesday, November 15th – 6:30 PM

OTHER BUSINESS:

APPROVAL OF PAY VOUCHERS, PERMITS etc.

Items to be signed:

- Accounts Payable Forms
- Birthday Cards
- Wastewater Tax Abatement – Brendan & Kimberly Higgins
- Sewer Expansion Application – Emily Baldwin

- Town Use
 - ✓ Twin Pines Housing-Syd Crook-10/19/2022
 - ✓ Chapin Senior Center-Whipple Hall
 - ✓ Joe Kubit – Tax Prep Help (January-Training, February, March, April)

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Building/Zoning Permits – approved

- Chris & Karen Bonewald, TM 078-031-0-0-0. Build 12x28 shed. **BP 22-119**. Approved. 10/12/22.
- Katherine Yost, TM 056-011-0-0-0. Installing woodstove with pipe for vent. **BP 22-121**. Approved. 10/12/22.
- Mark Hamel Et Al, TM 020-013-0-0-0. Mudroom upgrade, new panel radiator heater, new doors, lighting, built-ins. **BP 22-118**. Approved. 10/17/22.
- Russell Layton Jr Revocable Trust, TM 091-001-0-0-0. Remodel w/addition adding 705sq ft. Demo & rebuild detached garage for 994sq ft. **BP 22-116**. Approved. 10/17/22.
- Lisa Garrahan Revocable Trust, TM 050-003-0-0-0. Build 48x26 2 story garage/barn w/20x26 basement. Moving current leach field 4 bdrm. **BP 22-120**. Approved. 10/17/22.
- Robert J Sammon Trust, TM 117-008-001-0-0. Build 36x56 Barn with loft w/no heat. **BP 22-122**. Approved. 10/17/22.
- Christopher Caron, TM 062-036-0-0-0. Finish upstairs bedroom, sheet rock remaining area. **BP 22-112**. Approved. 10/17/22.
- Steven C Root. TM 034-002-0-0-0. Build 960sq ft barn with electric. **BP 22-126**. Approved. 10/21/22.

Sign Permits – approved

- 1856 Building, LLC, TM 085-044-0-0-0. 406 Main St Granite post sign. Approved 10/11/22

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:01PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Trina Dawson
Recording Secretary
Town of New London