



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – **DRAFT (2)** November 19, 2025 Whipple Memorial Town Hall - 6:00 PM

BUDGET COMMITTEE PRESENT: Charles Kelsey (Chair), Chris Lorio (Vice Chair), Lou Botta, Karen Epstein, Megan Brown, Lyndsay Lund, John Tilley, Richard Anderson, Select Board Representative.
Absent: Chris Lorio (Vice Chair), Kim Ilg, Cynthia Ruisis

STAFF: Wil Kidder, Town Clerk & Tax Collector, Putnam Kidder, Recreation Director, Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer, Ashley Seybold, Town Administrator.

ALSO PRESENT: Kelley Keith, Council on Aging – Chapin Senior Center, Tara Berseron, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Beth Heyward, Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc., Jim Culhane, Lake Sunapee Region VNA & Hospice, Lisa Cohen and Derick Aumann, New London Hospital, Melissa Leintz, New London Garden Club, Elizabeth Harper, Lake Sunapee Protective Association, Kathy Thomas, Little Lake Sunapee Protective Association, Tyler Toy, Pleasant Lake Protective Association, Tricia Glick, Messer Pond Protective Association, Rob Prohl, Council on Aging, Jamie Hess, Peter Vedova, Tim Paradis, Mary_____, John Ellis New London Energy Committee, Peter Nichols, New London Housing Commission.
Residents: Larry Kloth, Jackie Christensen, Robin Raine-Lobacz, Meredith Smith.

Agenda: Consent Agenda: Approval of November 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes, Budget Review Recreation Department, Appropriation Requests: New London Hospital – Ambulance, Lake Sunapee Regional VNA & Hospice, Council on Aging- Chapin Senior Center, Upper Valley-Lake Sunapee Planning Commission, New London Housing Commission, New London Conservation Commission, New London Garden Club, New London Energy Commission, Little Lake Sunapee Protective Association, Pleasant Lake Protective Association, Messer Pond Protective Association, Lake Sunapee Protective Association, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc., Lake Sunapee Region Chamber of Commerce, New London Archives, Public Comments.

Meeting Summary: The New London Budget Committee meeting covered budget and appropriation requests from various organizations for the fiscal year 2027. Discussions focused on budget and appropriation requests, program effectiveness, community impact, and potential funding sources. A major topic was the Energy Committee's request for increased funding in accord with the Town's sustainability goals, which resulted in a request for the committee to return with additional information.

Chair Kelsey called the meeting to order followed by recognition and thanks to the commissions and non-profit organizations for their commitment, dedication and impact through the work of their leaders and countless volunteers.

1. Consent Agenda: Approval of November 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes: Kelsey asked the committee members for any additional input on the meeting minutes. Richard Anderson asked to amend Page 2, Paragraph 1, Sentence 3 to read: The Board fully supports the plan as (scrutinized by the Board of Fire Wards) and presented by Chief, Jay Lyon to the Select Board. **IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Karen Epstein) to approve the Minutes of November 12, 2025 as amended. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Recreation Department Budget Presentation: Putnam Kidder, Recreation Director

Budget request: \$240,976 (a little over \$4,000 increase from 2026). **Waterfront Staff Wages:** Proposed changes: Reducing beach attendants from 7 to 5 days a week (no boat rentals on Mondays and Tuesdays) and reducing the average number of attendants from three to two. Recommendation to start lifeguards on the last day of the Kearsarge School District (June 12th). Total waterfront staff wages: \$58,940, a reduction of \$6,662 from 2026. **John Tilley** recommended training staff to handle complaints about boat closures. **Conferences and Training:** Increase of \$3,000 (from \$6,400 to \$9,400) to cover lifeguard training certification, swim lesson program oversight, and consulting services. **Lifeguard Swim Supplies:** Need updated AEDs at both beaches, costing \$2,600. **Telephones:** Increased due to bringing the budget in line with actual spending. **Special Events:** \$10,000 allocated for Haunted Happenings, but the actual cost was \$5,940 with a candy fund raising drive used to offset costs. Question was raised about the overtime cost incurred for Police presence. The **Recreation Revolving Fund** has a balance is approximately \$30,000. The use of the fund was clarified by Lynn Lewis. The monies in this fund can be used for any expense related to the Recreation Department if it **does not** require additional town funds that **have not** been allocated for that purpose.

3. Appropriation Requests: Individual requests for appropriations were made as follows:

- **Community Action Programs (Beth Heyward)**
 - Requested level funding at \$6,000.
 - Helped 131 New London residents, 32 households, providing 4,619 meals, and the equivalent value of \$108,743 for services.
- **Conservation Commission (Bob Brown)**
 - Budget: Modest 4% increase due to inflation.
 - Trail maintenance is the biggest expense (over 30 miles of trail). Rebuilding the Kidder-Cleveland trail.
 - Close partnership with the American Chestnut Foundation; they have provided over \$4,000 worth of materials.
 - Lou Botta offered a suggestion to partner with Trex Corporation for benches.
 - Charles Kelsey indicated that discussion regarding capital reserve funds for land acquisition and preservation would be held at the meeting (January 7th) when the committee addresses the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

- **CASA of New Hampshire (Tarah Bergeron)**
 - Requested level funding at \$2,000.
 - CASA provides volunteer advocates for children in court.
- **Pleasant Lake Protective Association (Tylea Toy)**
 - Requested \$7,000 to help offset the Pleasant Lake Host program.
 - Spent \$21,000 in total employment funds.
- **Little Lake Sunapee Protective Association (Kathy Thomas)**
 - Requested \$7,000 for the Lake Host program.
 - Total expense for the Lake Host program was \$21,000.
- **Garden Club (Melissa Leintz)**
 - Requested a \$1,500 grant to maintain 14 pocket gardens, provide scholarships, library flowers, and a wildflower/pollinator program for third graders.
- **Council on Aging (Rob Prohl, Chairman)**
 - No specific budget request mentioned but the Council has funds if needed.
- **Lake Sunapee Protective Association (Elizabeth Harper)**
 - Requested \$8,000 for the Lake Sunapee Host program.
 - Inspected over 5,000 boats, spent about \$50,000 to fund the program,
 - Detected and removed a small infestation of curly leaf pondweed.
 - Also supporting other lake associations in watershed management planning.
 - Other towns (Sunapee and Newbury) also contribute \$8,000.
 - Lou Botta asked whether there is a law enforcement protocol for staff to initiate and whether it has ever been needed. Staff can quickly text and call staff if there is an issue and there is a protocol to engage law enforcement if needed and to date there has not been a need.
 - Charles Kelsey commented about the exceptional engagement and effectiveness of lake Hosts enforcing rules and educating boaters, and the significant value this brings to the protection of our lakes.
- **New London Housing Commission (Peter Nichols, Chair)**
 - Peter Nichols described the activity of the Housing Commission as busy working with a \$100,000 Housing Opportunity Grant (HOP) planning for our Town to address the critical need for housing. Nichols stated that this is a high priority in our master plan. In FY 2025, requested and received \$15,000, plus \$1,500 in administrative costs for recording. Did not have HOP grant in place at that time.
 - Through the grant, have been working with a consultant to harvest data found in our tax assessing database and more.
 - Before HOP grant the Commission had the \$15,000 plus administrative cost (\$1,500). In FY 2026 had the HOP grant in place and therefore, requested a decrease in appropriations to \$5,000 plus recording expense (\$1,500). The HOP grant has now expired. Therefore, this year the Commission is requesting \$10,000 plus \$1,500 for recording expenses.

- Peter Nichols reviewed the progress the Housing Commission is making through zoning tools and prioritized lists gained through public forums.
- Summarizing, the HOP grant has 3 phases: discovery, visioning, and the pathways (final stage) to get to those prioritized needs. The Commission has made recommendations to adjust zoning laws that will help create the opportunity for more dense housing but ultimately it will be up to the voters to decide.
- **New London Hospital Ambulance (Lisa Cohen and Derick Aumann)**
 - Mobile integrated health program to help people stay in their homes.
 - Fleet of five ambulances (three at the hospital, one in Sunapee, and one in storage in Croydon).
 - 24-hour truck at the hospital, 24-hour truck at the Sunapee Fire Station, and a 12-hour truck Monday-Friday at the hospital.
 - Karen Epsttein asked how the request to New London of ~\$197,000 was determined. Lisa Cohen explained that the process was updated last year based on usage from 5 years of call data. New London is the largest user of the services.
 - The ambulance service supports seven towns.
 - Lisa Cohen shared that the service does run at a financial loss, but the hospital covers the losses with other services such as using EMTs in the emergency room to augment those services and which are reimbursed via insurances.
- **Lake Sunapee Visiting Nurse Association (Jim Culhane)**
 - Requested \$12,600 to offset unreimbursed care in New London.
 - Served approximately 260 patients in New London.
 - Provide services regardless of a person's ability to pay or insurance status.
 - The VNA is facing significant managed care challenges: Medicare Advantage plans and lower reimbursement rates.
- **Energy Committee (Jamie Hess, Chair, Peter Vedova, Committee Member)**
 - Jamie Hess described the budgets that the Committee oversees including operating budgets for education and outreach events, and its Capital Reserve Fund intended for investments that return savings to taxpayers.
 - He spoke to the achievements regarding the completion of the LED street light replacement project (cost \$10,000, returns \$8,000/year).
 - No investment cost has been incurred for two municipal solar arrays, and they generate some revenue to the town.
 - Installed new solar panels on the fire station and the town is eligible for a federal rebate of almost \$20,000.
 - Peter Vedova made a request of \$150,000 for the Energy Capital Reserve Fund comprised of a "catch-up" from two prior years of underfunded requests and to be used for a solar panel array at the transfer station, buying out the investor-owned arrays, and achieving the goal of 100% renewable electricity by 2030 as directed by Town Meeting in the 2018 Warrant Article.
 - Also proposed that a new highway department building use the roof space to accommodate a solar array.

- Peter Vedova estimated the payback for purchasing the private investor-owned arrays at 10 years, but a valuation of the arrays needs to be completed to verify the actual projected return.
- Charles Kelsey asked why the request was \$150,000 versus \$50,000 as reflected in the CIP and presented to the Select Board. Peter Vetiva explained that they increased the request and thought the first request was to the Budget Committee. Kelsey asked if the Energy Committee could provide more detail supporting the \$150,000 request.
- **Messer Pond Protective Association, Tricia Glick**
 - Requested level funding for the Messer Pond Lake Host Program at \$3,900.
 - Members have clocked in over 325 hours, prioritizing weekend and holiday coverage.
- **Community Action Programs (Beth Heyward)**
 - Requested level funding at \$6,000.
 - Helped 131 New London residents, 32 households, providing 4,619 meals, and the equivalent value of \$108,743 for services.
- **Chamber of Commerce**
 - Not represented at the meeting. Requested \$15,000; the Select Board had decreased the amount to \$12,500 in its budget.
- **Archives**
 - Ashely Sebold represented the request of \$7,000 and that it was level funded from last year.
- **Public Comment**
 - Larry Kloth suggested that there are more pressing issues for the town than investing in solar, and the investing by the town should instead be directed to offering training and designation incentives to fire and police personnel and tying repayment to tenure. Mr. Kloth stated that the town should not be looking to investment models that have uncertain returns.

A motion was made to adjourn. **IT WAS MOVED (Lou Botta) AND SECONDED (Karen Epstein) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:59PM

Action Items:

- **Follow up with Energy Committee:** to gain a more comprehensive representation of the \$150,000 request for Capital Reserves, the projects represented, their relation to the capital reserve balance, and the timing of anticipated expenditures and revenues.
- **Find and Distribute Warrant Article:** Find the specific wording of the 2019 warrant article related to the town's sustainability goals in the town report and distribute it to the committee.

- **Follow up on Revolving Fund:** Determine how the fund could be used for specific expenses in the 2027 budget appropriation request.

Note: Meeting minutes prepared by Charles Kelsey, Karen Epstein, Ashley Seybold, and with assistance from HyNote meeting translator conversion. The minutes do not reflect comments and conversations verbatim but capture the essence of intent and data where appropriate. The entirety of the meeting can be accessed and viewed on the town website.

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, NewLondon.NH.gov, if more than the brief description contained in these meeting minutes is desired.