



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, December 14, 2022 6:30 PM, Whipple Town Hall

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Lorio, (Chair) Joe Cardillo (Vice Chair), Hannah Bianchi, Lou Botta, Lyndsay Harkins, John Wilson, Colin Beasley, Melissa Leintz, Bill Helm (Selectmen's Representative)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mark Christensen

STAFF PRESENT: Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer

OTHERS PRESENT:

Adam Ricker, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Emily Cobb, Police Chief

Will Kidder, Town Clerk-Tax Collector

Crystal Schimpf, Library Director

Eula Kozma, Library Trustee

Jay Lyon, Fire Chief

Bob Brown, Mark Vernon, Michael Kennedy: Conservation Commission

Putnam Kidder, Recreation Director

Steve Ensign, Board of Firewards

Rob Prohl, New London resident

Peter Nichols, Housing Commission

Celeste Cook, Welfare Officer

Jerry Coogan, Waste Reduction Committee

Lisa Cohen, New London Hospital CFO

Approval of Minutes of December 7, 2022

John Wilson noted typographical errors for correction.

It was moved (Lou Botta) and seconded (Joe Cardillo) to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2022 meeting as amended. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Selectmen's Report

Selectman Helm stated the employee luncheon was held on Friday. It was great to see the turnout of all our employees.

With regard to the land purchase, Selectman Helm reported the Selectman are now focused only on the lot west of Hilltop Road.

FY2024 Budget Review:

Fire Department & Firewards

New London Fire Chief Jay Lyon reported that this year the Selectmen allowed the Fire Department and the Police Department to apply for reimbursement grants. In reviewing the current budget, although Fire gear continues to go up year after year, they were able to get funding through a grant to help with these costs. Chief Lyon recommends cutting the line item for Uniforms/Safety Equipment by \$6,400 which is the cost of two sets of gear. There would still be enough remaining in that line item for two sets of gear if they had a new hire or need to replace it.

John Wilson inquired about the Capital Reserve amount of \$64,000 for radio replacement. He doesn't see where that is listed. Chief Lyon stated they are currently discussing the operating budget so it wouldn't be listed there. Mr. Wilson stated he understands that, but it isn't in the capital reserve section. Also, under Building Maintenance, the amount of \$10,000 for a split unit is not included either. Chief Lyon responded it may be under the Department of Public Works budget since they oversee the buildings. Mr. Wilson stated he does not see that anywhere. Finance Officer Lynn Lewis stated she does not see it either and will check on these items.

Colin Beasley asked about vehicle repair and maintenance and what triggers a capital expenditure versus an operating budget expense. Chief Lyon responded that examples of capital expenditures are pumps or repairs/maintenance to the large pieces of fire apparatus.

Mr. Beasley also asked what is included in the small tools and equipment line item. Chief Lyon stated they annually go through ten panels of foam at \$155 each, replacement parts on over 20 dry hydrants and cisterns in town and servicing of life packs are some of the things included.

Mr. Beasley asked about computers and maintenance as there isn't anything in the budget for those items. Lynn Lewis responded they do have computers but this most likely is included in the telephone budget line item. Chief Lyon responded they have five computers in the department. Mr. Beasley questioned if the cost allocation should be modified so the Fire Department is assigned some of these costs. Ms. Lewis will research this further.

Firewards – no changes

Emergency Management

Lou Botta, Emergency Management Director shared they are reducing their budget by 43%. This is due receiving a lot of supplies through state grants. The line item for travels and meals was lowered due to meetings being done via Zoom. The emergency supplies budget includes primarily meals ready to eat (MRE's). Since we are so isolated, we have established a sufficient stock of these in case of emergency. The CERT team is ongoing. Mr. Botta discussed a future need for generators. While most of the town buildings have emergency generator back up, they are getting old. Mr. Botta is working with the state to apply for an emergency management performance grant (EMPG) to help with the cost of them.

Colin Beasley asked about Code Red. What percent of the town is in the system and what is the cost. Mr. Botta stated about 60% of the town has subscribed to code red and it is a set fee that is paid to the company. Mr. Botta also shared that over 50% of the residents in town have back up generators. Our town is well prepared compared to other communities.

Library

Crystal Schimpf, Director of Tracey Memorial Library stated there are no changes to the budget since they last presented to the Board of Selectmen. She did want to acknowledge that their budget is approved by the Library Board of Trustees in advance of coming before the Board of Selectmen and Budget Committee.

Colin Beasley asked about the amount of participation at the library from the town. Ms. Schimpf responded she had provided a fact sheet with this information. Ms. Schimpf shared she joined the library in June 2020 and has worked hard to increase and meet the needs of new residents as well as people that haven't used the library in some time. In 2021 they had 1,521 patrons who have active library cards. In August 2022 it increased to 1,650 patrons so they have seen an increase. In 2021 they had over 55,000 check outs of physical items and 13,220 check outs of digital items. They are on track to meet if not exceed those numbers in 2022. There was a greater use of the library this summer.

Recreation

Putnam Kidder, Recreation Director stated there is a new request from the Recreation department in the amount of \$9,960. Mr. Kidder provided an outline of this proposal in a memo. After Halloween this year, Mr. Kidder met with Chief Lyon and Chief Cobb to do a review of the Halloween event. From this meeting, the proposal was developed to manage and provide a safe event for the town. The numbers are increasing so safety is the number one priority. There is strong community support to continue this event which requires Main Street closure. The goal would be to get a group of volunteers to help organize and possibly fundraise for the event, similar to the Hospital Days event.

Chair Lorio stated if this was added to the budget the new total would be \$221,147.

Lyndsay Harkins stated the Halloween event is very popular with people in town. She asked if by putting this in their budget, they would officially be taking ownership of the event. Mr. Putnam answered yes, in collaboration with the Police Department and Fire Department. Ms. Harkins asked when the police and fire department collaborate with Hospital days, are those expenses noted somewhere or is it dissolved by their budgets? Lynn Lewis stated yes, it is absorbed into their budget. Ms. Harkins feels this is holding a different standard to the Recreation Department. She noted that however it is budgeted is fine but the same standard should be applied to all events and departments. Chris Lorio stated the difference is that the Recreation Department puts on Halloween and the other events like Hospital days and the triathlon are put on by the Hospital which is an outside organization. Ms. Harkins shared she is in full support of funding for safety measures but wants to ensure it is accurately tracked.

Chris Lorio, who is also a member of the Recreation Commission stated there are many events the Recreation Department would like to provide and not all or most will require police or fire department presence. The Recreation department has a mission to present a plan of events to the Selectmen for 2023.

Lou Botta asked about any collaboration with the Outing Club. Chris Lorio stated they do not provide any funding to the Outing Club.

Chris Lorio explained the Recreation Director Position funding. When there was a part time director in 2021/2022 the part time salary was \$31,900. Now that it is a full-time position, the salary will be \$64,821 along with benefits. There was an activity fund in 2022/2023 which was used to fund

activities through different organizations and that line item will now be zeroed out. The money that was in the activity fund is now being used to fund the full-time director salary and benefits position.

Chair Lorio stated there could be activities put on by the town that aren't sponsored by the Recreation department. The town can collaborate with the Rotary Club and other partnerships and have done so in the past. Colin Beasley asked what the source of funds would be for those requests because up to now it came from the Recreation Department. Lynn Lewis responded the Board of Selectmen would make that determination. Selectman Helm responded that this doesn't come up as a regular item.

Colin Beasley asked if the town incurs any costs associated with Hospital Days. Selectman Helm responded yes, they incur the costs of safety personnel, and this is embedded in the police and fire budgets. Mr. Beasley asked why we would identify a sum of money for the Halloween event and not identify the same sum of money for Hospital Days. Selectman Helm responded that Hospital Days is sponsored by an outside organization. The town is serving that organization in that particular situation and the Halloween event will be a Recreation partnered event and should include all of the costs for that event. Selectman Helm noted that Lyndsay Harkins raises a legitimate question about why one is different than the other.

New London Police Chief Emily Cobb stated that the difference between Hospital Days and Halloween is that Hospital is essentially a three-day long event and they have chosen to support that with the appropriate staffing. Halloween requires them to shut down a state road in order to put the event on safely. To shut down a state road they have to have appropriate detours and appropriate staffing levels at various intersections.

Health and Welfare

- Health Officer – no changes
- Lake Sunapee Region VNA – no changes
- Council on Aging (COA) – no changes
- New London Hospital – no changes
- Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) – no changes
- Welfare Officer & Vendor payments – no changes
- Community Action Program (CAP) – no changes

Regional Associations

- Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission – no changes
- Chamber of Commerce – Lynn Lewis read a letter from the Chamber of Commerce that provided additional information regarding their request for a slight increase for funding in FY2024. They have requested \$15,000. The Selectman reduced this amount back to the \$12,500.

Patriotic Purposes – no changes

Archives – no changes

Conservation Commission – Bob Brown, Chair of the Conservation Commission shared that there is a 9% increase in their budget which is primarily the result of the cost of materials.

Energy Commission - Joe Cardillo would like clarification as to why there hasn't been any money expended in the past few years and yet their request has doubled.

Housing Commission – John Wilson stated the Housing Commission has accomplished a lot and have moved things forward to the Planning Board. He asked Chair Nichols if there was reason to keep the \$15,000 for a consultant going forward. Chair Nichols responded yes there is. They have made big strides and the Planning Board has accepted their recommendations for zoning amendment changes and are they are looking forward to the vote in March. This will inform them a great deal regarding how the community feels about the work they are doing. As a result, there will be a renewed effort to continue with a consultant with more of a focus on community engagement. This will be money well spent.

Other Conservation

- **Care of Trees** – no changes
- **Lake protective Association**
 - **Lake Sunapee** – no changes
 - **Little Lake Sunapee** – no changes
 - **Messer Pond** – no changes
 - **Pleasant Lake** – no changes
 - **New London Garden Club** – no changes

Other Business

The next meeting will be held on January 4, 2023. Public Works and any other budgets not previously addressed will be reviewed. Chair Lorio stated there are a number of line items that need to be updated. Lynn Lewis will make those updates. The hope is to finalize the budget by January 11, 2023.

Motion to adjourn

**It was moved (Lyndsay Harkins) and seconded (Lou Botta) to adjourn the meeting.
THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:41PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson,

Recording Secretary
Town of New London