



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

April 19, 2021

6:00 PM

Via Zoom

### PRESENT:

John Cannon, Chairman  
Nancy Rollins, Selectman  
Janet Kidder, Selectman  
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator  
Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer

### ALSO PRESENT:

Police Chief Emily Cobb  
Fire Chief Jay Lyon  
Lou Botta, Emergency Management Director  
Will Kidder, Town Clerk/Tax Collector  
Bob Harrington, Public Works Director  
Steve Theroux, Treasurer  
Donna Larrow, PD Administrative Assistant

**New London Residents:** Nancy Marashio, Peter Stanley, Peter Hoglund, Karen Hoglund, Wendy Johnson, Celeste Cook, Doug Homan, Jessie Levine, Carol Foss, Pat Deragon, Doug Darling, Mike Brown, Karen Ebel, Bill Clough, Liz Meller, Doug Lyon, Maureen Strachan, Paul Linehan, John Wilson, Janet Haines, Joseph DiClerico, Katharine Fischer, Tina Helm, Bill Helm, Peter Nichols

**Budget Committee Members:** Joe Cardillo, Rob Prohl, Mark Christensen, Colin Beasley, John Raby

**Building and Facilities Committee members:** Rip Cross, Phil Sherman, Bob Bowers, Peter Bianchi

Chair Cannon called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and read the zoom authorization information. Chair Cannon called the roll: Nancy Rollins: present, Janet Kidder: present, John Cannon: present

Chair Cannon opened the Public Hearing: **Proposed issuance of a bond or note in the amount of \$1,100,000 for the purpose of purchasing real estate at 74 Pleasant Street, known as the Stahlman Building.**

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist stated this public hearing is being held pursuant to RSA 33:8A. The New London Board of Selectmen must hold a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed issuance of a bond or note in the amount of \$1,100,000 for the purpose of purchasing real estate at 74 Pleasant Street, known as the Stahlman Building. The question of whether to issue a bond or a note for these purposes will be placed on the warrant to be voted on at Town Meeting, Wednesday, June 9, 2021. It is important to note the Selectmen must place the warrant petitioned article as it was presented on the warrant. The amount or purpose of the warrant article cannot be

changed tonight. Steps to do that may be taken at town meeting when the article is up for deliberation.

Bill Helm, one of the petitioners for the article, stated the petition was initiated in January and was signed by 35 members of the town of New London. It provides flexibility in the ongoing process of determining the best facility for the police and dispatch activities of the town as well as other possible activities. There is no reason not to take advantage of this flexibility as purchasing the Stahlman building is a unique opportunity for the town to control a high-quality site in the center of town. He suggested that the Selectmen initiate negotiations with the owners of the property before town meeting in order to provide voters with information about the likely cost in completing this purchase.

Police Chief Emily Cobb stated the topic of the location of the police department and communications center has been discussed for many years. Options that have been discussed have included doing nothing and leave as is, renovate the Buker Building or to build a brand-new facility. Chief Cobb stated when the Stahlman building went up for sale last fall, she saw it as an opportunity to explore it as an option for the police and communications departments. She visited the site and after seeing that it was a possibility, she went ahead and started to gather information which included the development of preliminary plans and estimated cost. Benefits related to the Stahlman building include providing a wide-open canvas to allow the design of a proper workflow, layout and utilization of space, centrally located and better parking. There is also the ability to renovate the Stahlman building while the police and communications department are still in the Buker building so continuity of operations would not be disrupted.

Chief Cobb stated she understands some of the concerns as well. Some have stated that both buildings offer the same square footage and stressed that even if that is true, the spaces may not function the same. The Buker building was never designed as a Police Department and has been retrofitted over the years. Another concern has been what would happen to the Buker space if the Police and Dispatch center left. Chief Cobb stated the unknown of what would happen should not negate or outweigh the advantages of the Stahlman building as a police department. An increase in traffic on Pleasant St. was also raised as a concern. It is important to remember that emergency vehicles most likely travel through that intersection regardless. Also, the law requires that anyone operating an emergency vehicle is required to drive with due care.

Bob Bowers, Chair of the Building and Facilities Committee, explained that his committee is charged with looking at the welfare of the entire town and one of those elements is the cost and tax impact and various issues that do not directly impact the Police Department. Looking at the Stahlman building was a good idea of Chief Cobb's and it certainly offers a lot of good ideas and has potential in some ways. Mr. Bowers submitted a full report that the Selectmen have read but Mr. Bowers recommended going on the town website to read it to get all the details. A few of the concerns raised in this report include the Building and Facilities committee were asked to look at the Stahlman building solely for a police department. Purchasing the building for other potential uses is not something they have investigated. Mr. Bowers stated the buildings offer virtually the same amount of square footage and all the concerns Chief Cobb raised about the Buker building could be dealt with in a sensible way. Stahlman does offer more parking than the Buker building but the Building and Facilities Committee determined that there is the ability to create sufficient parking at the Buker building. A brand-new Communication tower would need to be installed at Stahlman. Access does not seem to be an issue at either site.

Mr. Bowers stated the cost differential is approximately \$1.4 million dollars more for the Stahlman building. A significant issue would be if the Police Department moved out, what would the Buker building be used for. Mr. Bowers stated there are two options, one is to raze the building so the costs go away, or you have an empty 9,400 square foot building with no clearly identified need for use with the maintenance costs that go with that or there is a large building that gets filled up and there are the additional costs of a second building. There is not a complete engineering study of the 30-year-old Stahlman building so there may be issues that have not been factored in yet. The Buker building has been looked at by both Engineers and Architects and the issues have been fully vetted.

Peter Bianchi stated it is his understanding that the warrant article only intends to purchase the building and there is nothing in the warrant article that states the building has to be used for a Police Department. This building could be used for anything else, and he wanted to make sure people understood this.

Mark Christensen asked if one space offered more of an opportunity for future expansion than the other location. Bob Bowers responded the Buker Building does provide for some future expansion. An expansion at Stahlman was not looked at.

Doug Lyon commented that towns always grow and the demand for space always increases and this is not a bad thing. The value of the Stahlman building will only likely go up. Regardless of the use, it would be prudent for the town to acquire a centrally located building that provides parking as most likely down the road there will be a need for it.

John Wilson commented that he was on the Budget Committee for many years and one of the concerns he had during those twelve years was the money pit that the library presented to them. He is concerned about the Stahlman building as there hasn't been a structural analysis done on the building and it has a flat roof and the snow load is a problem here. He feels a structural analysis should be done before investing in something like this. We should also be looking into the energy efficiency of the building as well. Traffic from the school and access through a busy intersection is an issue. The building has a lot of glass which possibly presents a security problem. He does not want to see the town get into another library situation.

Colin Beasley stated we are assuming the town is in agreement that we need a new Police Department. He would ask the Selectmen to look at what the priorities are for the town.

Selectman Rollins does not see the purchase of the Stahlman as advantageous for the Town of New London and does not support the warrant article. Selectman Kidder stated that Buker was never designed or intended for long term use by the Police Department. Purchasing Stahlman will allow the town to achieve two long term goals, a new Police Department building and a community Center which would take place in Buker once the Police station has been moved. It will also allow the Recreation Department to continue to use the space and will allow the welfare dept., emergency management and other town offices a place to go. She is in favor of giving the voters of this town the opportunity to vote on purchasing the Stahlman building. Chair Cannon commented that he is not sure the town should get into the real estate speculation business. It could potentially be a good deal, but it is not the role of the town to get into that business. He does not recommend supporting it.

Janet Haines stated it is important for us as a town to consider the position of the Police Chief. She is not only responsible for the safety of the town but is also responsible for how the citizens view the

police department. Ms. Haines is in support of this purchase and in support of Police Chief Emily Cobb and her team.

Planning Board chair Paul Gorman commented that the Planning Board, through the CIP process has voted for two consecutive years that the present location of the police department is inadequate to the mission of the police department. We need to act on this for the safety of the citizens and the Police Department.

Celeste Cook stated where the Police Station is now is horribly inadequate, noting that we seem to be ignoring their needs and need to start thinking forward.

Chair Cannon closed the public hearing. This issue will be voted on at Town Meeting on Wednesday, June 9, 2021 starting at 6:00pm.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to not recommend this warrant article at this time. Nancy Rollins: Yes, Janet Kidder: No, John Cannon: Yes. THE MOTION CARRIES.**

Selectman Kidder asked that the vote results be included in the warrant.

**Public Comment** – Bob Bowers stated the Building and Facilities Committee has discussed its role as an advisor to the Selectmen. What is not clear is its role to other committees and boards in town. The Building and Facilities committee believes it is appropriate and should be a requirement that when they have gathered information and facts and have done an analysis that this is important information for the public to know what the issues are and how they've been addressed. Mr. Bowers is asking the Selectmen if they feel it is appropriate for the Building and Facilities committee to share information at the upcoming public hearing and at town meeting. The Selectmen agreed that this is within the purview of the Building and Facilities Committee.

Planning Board Chair Paul Gorman stated there is an issue with the Town's political structure. The Selectmen should empower a committee to look at specific issues and once the committee has done that the committee goes out of existence and does not continue. He sees a committee that was developed that is growing in influence and opinions and presenting the information as if they have importance and this is beyond what the political structure of the town is. He is opposed to this. He does believe that the Selectmen should convene committees to look at specific issues but once they receive their charge and the report is received, the committee should stop. Chair Cannon disagreed and stated the work of the Building and Facilities committee has not been completed. Chair Gorman replied this is not the impression that he or several other citizens have.

### **Building & Facilities – recommendation for blinds for Whipple Hall**

Building and Facilities Committee member Phil Sherman stated he would like to address some specific questions that were raised at the last meeting. The color of the blinds proposed is white to match the window trim and to minimize the potential for fading. The arched portion up above will look lighter because the material is not room darkening. The dimension of the bar in the middle is 3 inches deep and an additional 2.5 inches of folded fabric when the curtain is the raised position. The cords are warrantied for seven years and the shades themselves have a lifetime guarantee for defects and delamination. Sun fading is not warrantied but the vendor has seen life cycles of 25-30 years without any obvious problems. There was discussion about not having a shade on the upper arched

portion, but it is the recommendation of the subcommittee that the fixed panel be provided at the top. They also reviewed using shutters instead of shades, but the subcommittee is maintaining their recommendation that shades would be the better option. Selectman Kidder asked about noise reduction from the shades and Mr. Sherman responded there will be some contribution by the shades as they are a soft surface versus a hard wall surface, but not enough to make a significant difference in noise reduction. Selectman Kidder also has concerns about the aesthetics and asked if there were any other municipal buildings that have them that they could go look at. Mr. Sherman does not know of any place that has installed them. Selectman Rollins asked if this had been discussed with Jim Perkins and Mr. Sherman responded that yes, Mr. Perkins attended their last meeting. Mr. Perkins agrees with the subcommittee that this is the best option. Anything done there will impact the historic nature of the room to some degree, but these can be removed later if they decide to.

Selectman Rollins asked if we could solicit other vendors to get more bids. Mr. Sherman stated they went with Goedecke because the architect has worked with the current vendor in the past and is confident in their ability to perform. They can certainly identify other vendors and get other prices. Selectman Kidder stated in the past they have been criticized for not getting multiple bids so agrees they should get more than one bid. Rip Cross commented they just did a \$600,000 renovation to Buker Hall with one bid and questioned why the Selectmen would now want multiple bids on a \$15,000 item.

#### **Building & Facilities Committee draft charter**

Bob Bowers stated after the Selectmen had approved the charter at the last meeting, he noted there was a section at the bottom that had not been completed (How often the purposes of the committee would be reviewed). Chair Cannon stated he thought two years would be reasonable. The selectman were all in agreement.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to amend the charter to include the statement that this would be reviewed every two years. Nancy Rollins: yes, Janet Kidder: yes, John Cannon: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **Disbanding of Former Selectmen's Panel on Fiscal Policy**

The Selectmen thanked the former Selectmen's panel for all the work they did.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to disband the former Selectmen's panel on fiscal policy. Nancy Rollins: yes, Janet Kidder: yes, John Cannon: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **Location of Town Meeting on June 9th**

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist stated that if the Selectmen agree, the New London Historical society has agreed to host the town meeting this year. This is potentially the best location and has been successfully used for many other events. A question was raised about the cost, Ms. Hallquist noted that the cost has not been determined but it is expected to be minimal, only what is needed to cover the expenses of the Historical Society.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve using the New London Historical Society for town meeting in June. Nancy Rollins: yes, Janet Kidder: yes, John Cannon: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **Building & Facilities Committee recommendation to purchase land behind highway garage.**

Bob Bowers stated when it was brought to their attention that land behind the highway garage was for sale the Building and Facilities committee consulted with Bob Harrington who thought it was a good idea to investigate. They identified some wetlands but there is some usable land there for possible future needs. The Building and Facilities Committee voted and recommend that the town pursue the purchase of this property provided it be used for town building and facilities purposes. Peter Bianchi does not see the need for that much more space when there is space elsewhere to serve their needs. Although it is only \$135,000, he does not feel it is needed.

If this is supported, this would appear as a warrant article and included in the budget. Ways it could be paid for would be to raise the money through general taxation or get a loan. For this small amount it is typically not done by loan but that is a possibility.

Selectman Kidder would like to negotiate to see if this is the best price for this piece of property. The Selectmen asked that Kim Hallquist speak with the Realtor to negotiate a price on the property on behalf of the Selectmen.

**Approve the NH Municipal Bond Bank's loan agreement and the certificate of vote.**

Finance Officer Lynn Lewis reported that this was approved by the bond bank, so the Selectmen need to formally agree to sign the agreement. The grand total is \$1,886,000.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the loan agreement and certificate of vote. Nancy Rollins: yes, Janet Kidder: yes, John Cannon: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Proposal from Complete System Design, Inc. for IT support**

Kim Hallquist reported they have received a proposal from Complete System Design, Inc. for computer support services. Mike Williams is the current IT Officer and has been helping for over a year as a volunteer with a myriad of IT issues in the town. Mr. Williams realized the work the town needs done is more than expected from a volunteer. He has submitted a proposal for \$20,000 for his services for the next year. IT issues are complex, and many towns have part time and full time IT staff to oversee computer issues, New London does not yet have any paid staff for the town's IT needs. Police Chief Emily Cobb has worked with Mr. Williams and noted his expertise has been invaluable to their success especially in their recent transition to a new computer services vendor. The Selectmen are in favor of spending the \$20,000, putting it in the budget.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to accept the proposal from Complete System Design, Inc. Nancy Rollins: yes, Janet Kidder: yes, John Cannon: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Adoption of Board of Selectmen Rules of Procedure**

Kim Hallquist reported that the Rules of Procedure have been in effect for many years and each year the Selectmen decide if there any changes or updates that need to be made.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to accept the Rules of Procedure for another year. Nancy Rollins: yes, Janet Kidder: yes, John Cannon: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Planning Board recommendation for Alternate member**

Planning Board Chair Paul Gorman and the Planning Board have recommended Emily Campbell be appointed as an alternate member.

**IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to accept Emily Campbell as a Planning Board alternate member. Nancy Rollins: yes, Janet Kidder: yes, John Cannon: yes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### **Town Administrators Report**

Ms. Hallquist provided the following report:

- The Governor has lifted the state-wide mask mandate for the state of New Hampshire. Since that time, she has received an email asking the Board to withdraw its mask resolution that has been in effect since August. If the Selectmen want to consider this, Ms. Hallquist recommended putting this on the agenda for the next meeting. The mask resolution is in effect until the Selectmen decide there is no longer a need for it or because it had been replaced with an ordinance that would include fines and penalties. The Selectmen agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.
- *Municipal Matters* went out yesterday.
- A Beach Director has been hired. The Recreation Commission decided to abandon the idea of looking for a year-round Recreation Director at this time and instead focus on finding a Beach Director. Putnam Kidder will manage the beaches and will start this week. He will begin hiring lifeguards and beach attendants. The Recreation Commission will return to the search for a year-round Recreation Director once the beaches are underway and running smoothly.
- The Selectmen will need to discuss and decide whether there will be limited numbers of people allowed at the beaches due to COVID. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Selectman Rollins suggested having the Recreation Commission members and Mr. Kidder attend the next meeting. She would like to have procedures in place and any signage ready in time for Memorial Day.

### **Committee Meetings & Reports**

Selectman Kidder reported there was a Planning Board meeting on April 13, 2021. Concerns about the Barn Playhouse expansion were discussed, and Tom Vannatta of the Housing Commission attended to discuss their mission and goals. John Doyle attended to discuss actions they are taking to protect Messer Pond.

Selectman Rollins reported that the Housing Commission met on April 6, 2021. There is a lot of work going on to gather information so informed decisions and recommendations can be made. The next meeting is next week.

### **Meeting Minutes**

**IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2021 and April 7, 2021 meetings. Nancy Rollins: yes, Janet Kidder: yes, John Cannon: yes. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED.**

### **Upcoming Meetings & Special Events**

- Next Selectmen's meeting – Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 6:00 PM via Zoom
- Zoning Board-Tuesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm via Zoom
- Conservation Commission-Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> 8:30am via Zoom
- Energy Committee & Renewables Subcommittee-Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> 8:30am
- Budget Committee-Wednesday, April 21<sup>st</sup> 7:00pm via Zoom

- Buildings & Facilities Committee-Thursday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 6:30pm via Zoom

**Items to be signed:**

- Accounts Payable Voucher
- Birthday Cards
- Property Tax Credit/Exemption (7)
- Yield Tax Levy
- Current Use Assessment
- Recertification of Elderly Exemptions (2)
- Sewer Living Space addition

**Applications Approved &/or Denied**

Sign Permits – approved

- Temporary Sign “Name of Business-Coming Soon”. 406 Main St, Unit 1. Approved
- Permanent Sign 21-05 Village Sports (Replace Existing street sign) 428 Main St TM 085-041-0-0-0 Approved 4/14/2021.
- Permanent Sign 21-06 Village Sports (Directly on building) 428 Main St TM 085-041-0-0-0 Approved 4/14/2021.

Building Permits-approved

- Steven Briggs, 43 Turkey Hill Run, TM 051-020-0-0-0. Build 392sq ft addition to garage. BP 21-032. Approved 4/7/2021.
- Eric & Allison Campbell, 1512 King Hill Rd, TM 0129-017-0-0-0. Repair retaining wall/replace deck boards. BP 21-034. Approved 4/7/2021.
- Andrew & Connie McElwee, 66 Old Main St, TM 107-018-0-0-0. Install ground mounted solar panels. BP 21-035. Approved 4/9/2021.
- John & Beverly Caldon, 119 Carter Rd, TM 071-002-0-0-0. Screen in existing deck, building new deck. BP 21-033. Approved 4/9/2021.
- Michael D’Amante, 755 Pleasant St, TM 048-006-0-0-0. Build a 1002sq ft addition. BP 21-036. Approved 4/9/2021.
- John & Carolyn White, Sargent Rd, TM 086-012-0-0-0. New one-story single-family home with attached garage. BP 21-029. Approved 4/12/2021.
- Peter & Hannah Bianchi, 36 Job Seamans Rd, TM 074-008-0-0-0. Build 2 decks off rear house and garage. BP 21-040. Approved 4/14/2021.
- Harold & Nancy Lindsey, 135 Old Route 11, TM 056-022-0-0-0. Screen in portion of existing deck, square off corner of deck. BP 21-039. Approved 4/15/2021.

Zoning Permits-approved

- New London Barn Playhouse, 84 Main St, TM 073-041-0-0-0. Interior/Exterior renovations and addition. ZP 21-01. Approved 4/6/2021.
- Proudstone Corp/DBA: Peter Christians Tavern, 195 Main St, TM 073-079-0-0-0. Outdoor dining pavilion. ZP 21-06. Approved 4/6/2021.
- New London Hospital, 273 County Rd, TM 072-018-0-0-0. Office reno, take down wall. ZP 21-02. Approved 4/6/2021.
- Northeast Investments LLC, 406 Main St, TM 085-044-0-0-0. Remove chimney, finishes, insulation, make structurally sound and compliant. ZP 21-07. Approved 4/12/2021.



- First Baptist Church, 461 Main St, TM 085-032-0-0-0. Replace 2 sills under Sanctuary. ZP 21-09. Approved 4/13/2021.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY. Nancy Rollins: yes, Janet Kidder: yes, John Cannon: yes.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:02PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson  
Recording Secretary  
Town of New London