



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

April 20, 2020

4:00 PM

Meeting Conducted via Zoom

**Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically. The public has access to contemporaneously listen and participate in this meeting through the video conferencing at <https://zoom.us/j/91934158032> or by phone by calling 1-253-215-8782. The meeting password is 837911. For technical problems, please call 526-6401 or e-mail: [recreation@nl-nh.com](mailto:recreation@nl-nh.com).**

### PRESENT:

Nancy Rollins, Chairman  
Janet Kidder, Selectman  
John Cannon, Selectman  
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator  
Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer

### PARTICIPATING:

Doug Lyon, Town of New London Deputy Treasurer  
Steven Theroux, Town of New London Treasurer  
John Raby, Budget Committee Member

Selectman Kidder called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

### Financial status of town during COVID-19 Emergency

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist stated that given the unprecedented steps taken by the state and the nation to battle the Coronavirus, and the financial impacts those steps will likely have on the Town of New London, she, along with Finance Officer Wendy Johnson and Treasurer Steve Theroux, felt that it would be prudent to look at the town's cash flow for the coming months. This exercise will allow for advance planning if cash flow is impacted to the point where meeting the Town's obligations is in jeopardy.

In looking at cash flow, they looked at property taxes that will be due in July, October and January. Next, they looked at the amount of revenue they will expect to see from motor vehicle registrations which is the town's largest non-property tax source of revenue. It is likely that in the coming months there will be fewer new car registrations since people are not out car shopping, additionally, some property owners may have difficulty paying their property taxes on time due to a change in income level or due to job loss. There will also likely be reduced revenue sharing from the State of NH from rooms and meals tax and gas tax. Ms. Hallquist stressed that it is important to remember that until we see how tax property tax payments come in during mid to late June it is difficult to determine if we will have a cash flow problem, however, it is important to look into this early on.

Wendy Johnson, Finance Officer, discussed what might happen if property taxes are not paid on-time in July. She explained that currently, the town is in a good position since 96.6% of taxes due were paid in March. This means that there is enough cash right now to get us through July. The question is what is going to happen with payments in July, then October and then January 2021. A cash flow analysis was done using a 90% collection of tax payments for July and October. This analysis indicates that the town's cash flow will be sufficient until December when there will be a \$1.5 million shortfall. December is when the \$3.3 million dollar Merrimack County tax bill is due. If only 80% of tax payments are collected in July and October, we will be short \$2.5 million dollars in December. We have applied for a tax anticipation note (TAN) from Bar Harbor Bank, requesting \$1 million dollars but could probably get more if needed. Ms. Johnson was not sure what the interest rate would be on this note at this time.

Steve Theroux commented that they are preparing for the worst but hoping for the best, having never been in this situation before. He is concerned about the rising unemployment rate which is currently at 17% nationally. He also discussed finding ways to defer payments and consider looking at expenditures and perhaps postponing things until the next fiscal year.

Doug Lyon discussed the issue of tax abatements and asked for clarification as to whether the Selectmen has the authority to grant them. Ms. Hallquist responded that the Selectmen can abate taxes for "good cause shown" so the Selectmen will look at each case individually.

John Raby asked if the budget that was approved at town meeting would be changed, Chair Kidder noted that the current discussion is to delay certain expenditures to address potential cash flow shortfalls not to change the budget; she stressed that the Board is considering various options at this point.

Selectman Rollins stated it would be helpful to consider delaying salary increases, step increases, COLA's and furloughing employees in certain areas; she would like to look at three and six-month intervals for these expenditures.

Selectman Rollins would also like to review capital projects and consider delaying them. Ms. Hallquist noted that the funding for capital projects come from capital reserve funds, not from the cash flow funds being discussed for potential shortfall. Use of Capital Reserve Funds do not have impact on cash flow at all and this money cannot be used to help the town's cash flow issues. Selectman Rollins would like to know sooner rather than later if Colby-Sawyer College and the Hospital have plans for abatement requests as this could have a significant impact. Selectman Rollins suggested that the Library Trustees be invited to meet with the Board to discuss their plans to deal with the financial impacts of this emergency.

Chair Kidder asked if the College and the Hospital will be receiving any federal funds and if they do receive funds, what impact that would have on abatement requests. Chair Kidder also thinks the Board should consider a hiring freeze, noting that Public Works and the Fire Department had plans to advertise to hire for a position in their departments and that should be put on hold for now. She also feels we should wait on doing paving projects and purchasing the roller.

The Board agreed to invite the Budget Committee to attend the next meeting of the Board.

#### **Approve recommitment warrants for new Tax Collector as prepared by Auditors**

**IT WAS MOVED (John Cannon) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the recommitment warrants as prepared by the town auditors. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Roll call vote: John Cannon: Yes, Nancy Rollins: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes

## **Town Administrators Report**

Ms. Hallquist provided the following report:

- All departments are performing well under this state of emergency. Emergency Management Director Lou Botta is leading the effort to secure essential items such as gloves, masks, gowns and disinfectant. The town is sharing its emergency items with other town organizations such as the Ambulance and Hannaford's as needed.
- Town emergency management staff participate in daily conference calls with the state emergency operation officials.
- The New Hampshire Municipal Association has reported to the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFRR) which is charged with investment and oversight of COVID-19 relief and stimulus funds provided to New Hampshire by the federal government. Ms. Hallquist and Wendy Johnson responded to the survey regarding the town's estimates on short term financial impacts due to the COVID-19 emergency. They will be hearing about how the state will distribute those funds in the coming weeks.
- Senator Ruth Ward and Representatives Karen Ebel and Dan Wolf are in contact with the Selectmen's office with updates as needed; this has been very helpful.
- The New London Barn Playhouse has announced its plans to cancel the 2020 season.
- Kris McAllister has been named Chief Assessor, replacing Norm Bernaiche.
- Volunteer interest forms have been received for various boards and commission. Ms. Hallquist recommends the Board continue to accept applications until appointments can be made once the Board resumes public meetings in the Sydney Crook room, this will allow the Selectmen to meet with applicants if needed. All Board members currently on Boards will stay in place for now.
- We are trying to put out *Municipal Matters* weekly to keep everyone updated. Chair Kidder recommended including information about the transfer station as it seems that people are cleaning out their houses and basements and the amount of stuff being thrown away is overloading the transfer station. Ms. Hallquist stated that this is happening throughout the state and she will remind New Londoner's to please hold off on bringing so much to the transfer station at this time.

## **Meeting Minutes**

**IT WAS MOVED (John Cannon) AND SECONDED (Nancy Rollins) to approve the minutes of March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting. THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED.**

Roll call vote: John Cannon: Yes, Nancy Rollins: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes

## **Upcoming Meetings & Special Events**

Next regular Selectmen's meeting – Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 PM via Zoom – meeting sign-on information will be included on the meeting agenda.

## **Items to be signed**

- Accounts Payable Voucher
- 2020 MS-232 Report of Appropriations Actually Voted
- Recommittal Warrant – Property Tax
- Warrant - Yield Tax – Map 046-035 & 060-003
- Land Use Change Tax – Map 117-016-0-0-0
- Brookside Drive Culvert Replacement Contract
- Solar Energy Systems Exemptions

## **Applications Approved &/or Denied**

### Sign Permits – all approved

- Permanent Sign 20-04 –Lois Dupuis, Healthy Blend, 280 Main Street, TM 085-041-0-0-0 for two signs.

### Building Permits

- OpaOma NH LLC, 30 Carter Road, TM 070-045-0-0-0. Roof mount solar 7.8kW. BP 20-018 approved 3-24-20.
- William & Marta Clough Trusts, 23 Lovering Lane, TM 084-059-0-0-0. Roof mount solar 4.03kW. BP 20-019 approved 3-24-20.
- Robert & Jennifer Digrigoli, 11 Seasons Condominiums, TM 110-011-0-III-11. Renovate 2 baths & add central air. BP 20-021 approved 4-2-20.
- Dana Davis, 223 Sutton Road, TM 123-008-0-0-0. Build 24 x 28 1-1/2 story barn. BP 20-022 approved 4-2-20.
- John Ellis, 37 Old Main Street, TM 095-031-0-0-0. Extension of BP19-066 to build 24x36 garage & shed foundation, new expiration 6-6-2021. BP 20-023 approved 4-2-20
- Robert Palo, Knight Hill Road, TM 094-027-0-0-0. Build new single-family w/garage & barn. BP 20-024 approved 4-8-20.
- Jeffrey Davis, 402 Hall Farm Road, TM 076-003-0-0-0. Build 16x20 storage barn. BP 20-025 approved 4-8-20.
- Thomas & June Poliseno, 302 Wilder Lane, TM 111-006-0-0-0. New metal roof in one area. BP 20-026 approved 4-8-20.
- Matthew & Lori Rockacy, 38 Pond's Edge Lane, TM 106-019-0-0-0. Finish 1035 sq. ft. of basement. BP 20-027 4-14-20.

**IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Roll call vote: Nancy Rollins: Yes, John Cannon: Yes, Janet Kidder: Yes**

The meeting adjourned at 4:43PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson  
Recording Secretary

Town of New London