



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES July 10, 2024 Whipple Memorial Town Hall 5:30 PM

PRESENT:

Bill Helm, Chairman
Bebe Hammond Casey, Selectman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Andrew Winter, Twin Pines Housing Executive Director
David Crandall, Twin Pines Housing Director of Development and Communications
Will Kidder, Town Clerk & Tax Collector
Richard Tutwiler, Tracy Library Director
Police Chief Emily Cobb
Police Lieutenant David Keith
Ashley Seybold, Police Facilities Advisory Committee Chair
Malaika Sidmore, Police Facilities Advisory Committee member
Jim Casey, Police Facilities Advisory Committee member
Phil Sherman, Police Facilities Advisory Committee member
Peter Nichols, Housing Commission Chair
Kim St. Clair Bodden
Ben Wallace
Nancy Marashio
Jennifer Redman
Molly Hall Seeley
Christine Adams

Shelby Blunt
Steve Ensign, Board of Firewards Chair
John Wilson, Budget Committee member
Karen Epstein, Budget Committee member
Richard Epstein
John Ellis, Wase Reduction Committee member
Charlene Baxter, Planning Board member
Doug Baxter
Steven Sidmore
Bob Bowers
Joe Cardillo
James Cricenti
Colin Beasley
Pete Hogleund
Maureen Sheehan
Linda Hagan
Dan Snyder
Mike Liberty
Hardy Hazenfuss
Linda Hogan
Michael Canencia
Debbie Euddy
Jenn Sweet

Chair Helm called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM

Chair Helm introduced Richard Tutwiler, the new Tracy Memorial Library Director, and welcomed him to the community.

REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF INTEREST CHARGED ON LATE PROPERTY TAX PAYMENT

Shelby Blunt spoke on behalf of her son David Aisner who was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Aisner requested that the Board of Selectmen waive, and refund, the late property tax interest he paid in the amount of \$688.43. Ms. Blunt explained that Mr. Aisner had mailed two checks in early December, one

each for the 2023 quarter 3 and quarter 4 tax bills. When the funds were withdrawn from Mr. Aisner's bank account, he assumed the Town had received the funds. It was later discovered that the checks had been stolen and fraudulently cashed; the town did not receive the funds as Mr. Aisner assumed. Ms. Blunt expressed her opinion that the intent of interest fees on late payments is to penalize people who do not pay their taxes on time. She also noted that the paper tax bills mailed do not explain that you can pay your taxes online, rather than through a check in the mail, and she feels that could be beneficial to note on the bills. Ms. Blunt feels that if a taxpayer is not personally at fault for the late payment, they should not be penalized with late interest. She shared that she had a similar situation happen to her with the IRS and the IRS was able to waive their penalties and pay it back with interest.

Will Kidder, Tax Collector, expressed sympathy for what Mr. Aisner has gone through. He explained that this is not the first time this situation has happened in New London, and in those past cases, there has always been interest charged. He spoke of the importance of being consistent. Mr. Kidder also expressed concern that he has not confirmed there is a statutory authority to abate the late interest penalty and he feels that granting this request would set a precedent for future requests.

Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator, agreed that it is an extremely unfortunate circumstance. She expects that instances of fraud will continue to rise, and she agrees with Mr. Kidder that granting the request now would set a precedent for future requests. She is not aware of another town that has granted a waiver or abatement of late interest in this circumstance.

Selectman Kidder agreed that it was a stressful situation and noted that if this was an error on the Town's part they would certainly make it right but she did not feel the Town was at fault. Selectmen Casey also expressed sympathy for Mr. Aisner but feels it is important to support Mr. Kidder who must answer to the taxpayers every day. Chair Helm suggested reaching back out to the bank that cashed the check in error and pressuring them to make it right because he does not feel it's the Town's place to become the arbitrator between taxpayers and their banks, especially with cases of fraud continuing to rise.

THE SELECTMEN VOTED on the request to waive the \$688.43 in late property tax interest. In favor of granting the request (none), in favor of denying the request (Helm, Kidder and Casey) THE REQUEST WAS DENIED UNANIMOUSLY.

PRESENTATION BY ANDREW WINTER, TWIN PINES HOUSING

Mr. Winter, Executive Director of Twin Pines Housing, who was joined in the audience by David Crandall, Twin Pines Housing Director of Development and Communications, opened with an update on the Long Meadows Commons project. He explained that Twin Pines Housing has been working on the feasibility of domestic water supply via private wells for the 60-unit affordable housing project they are proposing to build on the parcel behind the Newport Road Shopping Plaza, commonly known as the Cricenti Property. A recent test well provided the most promising results yet for moving to the next steps in the state mandated process for public water supplies.

Mr. Winter noted that Twin Pines Housing is seeking funding for the Long Meadow Commons project from NH Housing Finance Authority. Twin Pines is at the upper limits of what NH Housing can invest in the project and they have asked Twin Pines to explore the possibility of lowering the financing needed by requesting funds from the Town of New London. Twin Pines is specifically requesting that the Board of Selectmen to consider using the funds from the \$600,000 grant the Town was awarded from the InvestNH Municipal Grant Program, a state sponsored program to encourage the production of work force housing. The grant was awarded based on the Town's approval of the proposed 60-unit Long Meadows Commons project and awards towns \$10,000 per unit when the project provided workforce

housing. Other towns such as Newport, Manchester, Goffstown and Peterborough have committed some or all their InvestNH grants back into projects that made those grants possible.

Mr. Winter explained that one of the concerns from NH Housing is the cost of the project. He noted that Twin Pines could have saved costs on the project by pursuing a more efficient design, however, the proposed four building design was chosen based on community preference for aesthetics. A funding commitment from the Town would make it much more likely that the project will move forward. There are several options for how the Town could contribute the funds back to the project and Twin Pines would be pleased with whichever approach the Town is willing to contribute.

Mr. Winter spoke about the pressing and urgent need for workforce housing, which the project could help alleviate. He also gave examples of the economic benefits of the project including the one-time Land Use Change Tax penalty the Town will receive when the property is removed from current use and an estimated \$100,000 in annual property tax payments in its first full year of operation. Mr. Crandall provided a formal letter to the Board detailing the request and Mr. Winter thanked the community and the Town for their support and thanked the Board of Selectmen for considering the request. He asked for any questions that the Board might have and offered to return in two weeks for a decision.

Chair Helm opened the meeting to public comments and questions regarding the request. Peter Nichols, Chair of the Housing Commission but speaking personally, supported the request and asked the Board to give it careful consideration. Steve Ensign, a former Chair of NH Housing Authority and current Chair of the Board of Firewards, expressed his opinion that granting the request would provide valuable representation from the Town of New London in support of the project. Ben Wallace, New London resident, supported the project as an efficient way to provide more housing while conserving open space, rather than building more single-family homes. Eve Burton, a New London resident who has been involved in providing support for the project, thanked the Cricenti family for their support. She explained that there is potential for some of the land to be used to connect existing trails in town and also possible future community uses for the existing barn, so she sees the entire project as a win-win. Nancy Marashio, New London resident and member of the League of Women Voters of New Hampshire, shared that they have made housing a priority topic this year. She is in support of the request.

Selectmen Kidder asked Mr. Winter to elaborate on what other communities are doing to support affordable housing. Mr Winter noted that the Town of Hanover has donated several properties, including twenty acres for the Gile Hill project. The Town of Lebanon has used community development block grant funding to support Twin Pines projects as well. Chair Helm noted that if the project does not succeed, the grant will not be awarded so he feels it will be in the best interests of the Town to approve the request. The Board will consider the request and make a final decision at a future meeting.

REVIEW OF COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (DISPATCH) HISTORY

Chief Cobb gave a presentation covering the nearly fifty-year history of the Communications Center and dispatch function in the town. She thanked Jim Perkins, Town Archivist, for his assistance in gathering documentation which included internal records, Board of Selectmen meeting minutes, Town Reports and institutional knowledge. Chief Cobb started with the opening of New London Central Dispatch on March 31, 1975 and covered several topics including the history of the communications technology, the changes to the organizational structure, prior studies on the feasibility of a local dispatch center, the benefits and value of the communications center and some words of appreciation received from members of the community over the years.

Chair Helm invited public questions regarding the presentation. Dr. John Wilson opened his comments by sharing that any time he has called the New London Dispatch the service has been exceptional. He

expressed his concern that in the process of voting on a new police facility, “sticker shock” might get in the way. He shared his estimates on the cost of running a communications center, the cost of building a new communications center, what size that center might be and the cost of moving operations to a new location. Dr. Wilson feels these estimates should be considered by the Police Facilities Advisory Committee and made public.

Chair Helm clarified that the presentation was not intended to be a budget discussion, but rather a history of communications and dispatching in New London. The Police Facilities Advisory Committee (PFAC) scope of work is to help the Selectmen determine, with the assistance of consultants, what is the best program and site for a police facility regardless of whether it is in the current location or a different one. He stressed the importance of letting the advisory committee process run its course. The budget process will begin in the fall, and it is up to the Selectmen and the Budget Committee to determine if the cost of communications activities for the town needs to be reviewed along with all other aspects of the budget. He stressed that his number one priority is public safety. There was a discussion of what space a communications center might represent as part of the overall police facility. Chair Helm asked that PFAC members remember that dispatch is one piece of the puzzle and there is still information to be received from Lavallee Brensinger Architects (LBA) once they are done with their work, however the budget issues are not relevant to what the advisory committee has been asked to do.

Colin Beasley asked that the Selectmen consider the complexity around the equation for communications facilities. He described a difference between calls for service that require sophisticated dispatch and capital infrastructure to support emergency services and general calls for service that he does not believe require the same level of infrastructure. He would like to see a more robust discussion around what costs are associated with each type of call and from his experience, as a former Budget Committee member, he does not feel that the budget process allows enough time to explore those types of cost nuances. Chair Helm noted that the Budget Committee is an independently elected body that can take as long, or as little time as they would like to discuss the budget and he advised waiting until October to see how the Board of Selectmen approach the budget process this year.

Bill Ross thanked Chief Cobb for her presentation and asked how many dispatching staff live in New London. Chief Cobb stated that three of the five full-time dispatching staff live in New London and the other two live nearby. He commented that he feels that supporting a work-force housing project directly relates to providing opportunities for those staff.

Mike Liberty shared a personal, positive, experience from 2016 with New London Dispatch and thanked Chief Cobb and the dispatch staff for their work.

Bob Bowers asked for more information on why some towns are no longer receiving services from New London dispatch and how comfortable are our dispatchers with knowledge of the other towns that they answer calls from. Chief Cobb explained that as broadband technology has changed, some towns did not fall within the radio range and could no longer be serviced. In one instance, a town dissolved their police department. Cost could be a possible factor however she did not explore those issues closely as part of the presentation. She expressed confidence in the dispatchers’ knowledge of all the five towns serviced as they have worked with them for a while.

Selectmen Casey asked for a clarification of who was originally involved in the 1975 New London Central Dispatch, what kind of training the dispatchers go through and what Chief Cobb sees as the future of dispatching. Chief Cobb shared that the original organization included the New London Police Department, Fire Department, Ambulance and Highway Department as well as the Wilmot Police and Fire Departments. She described the training process as beginning after a rigorous pre-hire screening

and including a twelve-week field training program with a veteran dispatcher, a three-day class with the NH Department of Safety and other professional development as appropriate, such as ones held by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO). Chief Cobb noted that a few years ago when the department switched to a new voice over IP telephone system, they could have begun having calls to the 603-526-2626 number answered with an automated attendant. She made the decision to continue having that number answered by a real person. In the future there might be some automated toning of emergency services, but she does not see a switch to those automated technologies for the foreseeable future.

The Police Facilities Advisory Committee will next meet on Friday, July 19th, at 8:30am in Whipple Memorial Hall. The architects may be on hand with some new details on their work.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Richard Tutwiler thanked the Selectmen for their earlier introduction and welcomed anyone interested to stop by the library and have a conversation about how Tracy Library can continue to serve the community. He is looking forward to working with everyone.

Chair Helm shared that Tracy Library Trustee Judith Fox has recently resigned and the Library Board of Trustees has asked if the Selectmen will appoint Emma Phipps as a full member of the Tracy Library Board of Trustees.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to appoint Emma Phipps to the Tracy Library Board of Trustees. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

UPDATE ON POLICE FACILITY PROJECT – POTENTIAL SITES

Chair Helm explained that the Selectboard will need to tell Lavallee Brensinger which potential site(s), in addition to the current Police Facility location, that they want them to consider for their work. He asked Selectman Kidder and Selectman Casey to give an update of their personal views on locations.

Selectman Casey has been considering how to get the “best bang for their buck.” If a pre-designed structure is test-fit into one site, she wonders if that will that give enough data for voters at Town Meeting. There are pros and cons to vacant parcels, and ones with existing buildings. She is still considering the Bonano property (Parcel 073-001) and the Broom property (Parcel 059-027) as good options.

Selectman Kidder has spent time considering what the Town of New London already owns that could be used as an alternative site. She does not feel any existing property would make sense to pursue. She has concerns about the Bonano property and the Broom property even if it is combined with a portion of the land from the abutting parcel owned by Bar Harbor Bank & Trust (Parcel 059-028). She feels that the property originally suggested seven years ago by former Police Chief Anderson, the Bewley property (Parcel 059-010) across from Hannaford and the Post Office, may be the least expensive option.

Chair Helm spoke to the extensive work that has been done to date on looking for a potential site. He feels that the most important two criteria are a consideration for keeping the facility on the main corridor, and ideally a two-acre minimum site. His opinion is that 198 Main Street (the Bonano property) and the Bewley property seem to still be the most viable. He would like to consider spending a little more money and asking Lavallee Brensinger to look both two properties, so the Selectmen have enough information to move forward.

Bob Bowers commented that he believes the overall price of the project should be the primary consideration, not just the initial asking price of a new parcel. He would like the Selectmen to continue to consider the Broom property and review the cost of renovating the building existing on that parcel. Chair Helm assured Mr. Bowers no decisions were being made immediately and the Selectmen are still open to hearing all objective opinions on any properties under consideration.

TRAFFIC AUDIT FOR CROCKETT'S CORNER & SEAMANS & RTE 11

Kim Hallquist reported that a resident approached her regarding a traffic incident at Crockett's corner intersection where she was nearly hit by another car in the intersection. The resident contacted NH State DOT and they informed her that if the Selectmen request a traffic audit, DOT will do that at no cost to the Town. Another individual reached out about a week later and asked for more information about the blinking yellow light that was removed from the intersection of Seamans Road and Route 11. Ms. Hallquist believes that could be considered at the same time. She noted that approximately ten years ago concerns about the safety of Crockett's Corner was raised by the Police and Fire Chiefs and Town Administrator with the State and accident information was provided to them. Selectman Kidder asked why the blinking yellow light was removed. Ms. Hallquist explained that the State removed all blinking lights that they did not feel were effective so as not to diminish the effectiveness of the others that were needed. The light was removed at the same time as the one at the intersection of Main Street and Pleasant Street.

IT WAS MOVED (Bebe Casey) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to ask NH State DOT to perform a traffic audit of the areas discussed. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

SALE OF TOWN LAND – WARRANT ARTICLE 20

The Board of Selectmen received permission from Town Meeting to sell a landlocked parcel off King Hill Road (132-012), that abuts Interstate 89. Ms. Hallquist has spoken with the attorney for some abutting property owners who may be interested buyers. If those abutting property owners purchase the lot, they are exploring whether they can annex it to their existing parcels and create three new building lots. The attorney has suggested that the potential buyers would purchase the parcel for \$5,000. Chair Helm noted that in this market, selling a property for lower than assessed value would be unusual. Ms. Hallquist will contact to the potential buyers to see if they would like to discuss a sale price.

ABATEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Chair Helm asked if there were any questions from the Board regarding the recommendations of the Assessors for the three following abatement applications:

- Recommended to be Denied:
 1. Filbin, 137 Knollwood Road Parcel 035-035-0-0-0
- Recommended to be Granted:
 1. Stotz Revocable Trust, 547 Forest Acres Road 106-009-0-0-0
 2. Dorr Revocable Trust, 1347 Little Sunapee Road 031-012-0-0-0

IT WAS MOVED (Bebe Casey) AND SECONDED (Janet Kidder) to approve the abatement recommendations of the Assessors for the three listed requests. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Ms. Hallquist reminded everyone that all businesses along Main Street are open during the water main replacement project. Some businesses have seen a dip in business due to the construction. The Police

Chief and Town Clerk have discussed with Ms. Hallquist the cost of parking tickets and the cost to replace a hang tag for beach parking, which are both currently \$25.00. They may be coming back to the Selectmen to recommend an increase to both fees to provide a greater deterrent to illegal parking and to sharing guest passes with non-residents. Ms. Hallquist noted that Bob Harrington's retirement party will be at Whipple Memorial Hall on Wednesday, July 17th, at 4:00pm. The Selectmen's presentation will be at 5:00pm and all are welcome to attend. Finance Director Lynn Lewis is busy working on closing out fiscal year 2024 and getting the new budget software up and running. Ms. Hallquist met with Phil Sherman, Pete Hoglund and Bob Harrington to review a contract for a proposed building study of all town buildings. The contract has been forwarded to Primex for them to review.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS & REPORTS

Selectman Casey reported on the New London-Springfield Water Precinct meeting from July 8th. The Commissioners heard from a representative from a local business who spoke to the impact the project is having on them. The Commissioners were very responsive to the issue, and they have put signs up on either end of Main Street letting people know that businesses are open. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee met on July 9th. They had a robust discussion on sidewalk maintenance and mapping and are forming plans for how best to approach their goals. Selectmen Casey also attended a Pleasant Lake Protective Association meeting where septic pumping is still a topic of discussion.

Chair Helm and Selectman Kidder both spoke regarding the fiscal impacts of new initiatives. Chair Helm feels that with Selectman Casey also on the Budget Committee she is in a good position to weigh all the demands that are being made on the taxpayers.

MEETING MINUTES: - Approve Selectmen's Minutes of June 12th

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to accept the minutes of the June 12th meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The next regular Selectmen's meeting will be Wednesday, July 24th at 5:30pm, at Whipple Memorial Hall. Meetings will continue to be held on Wednesdays throughout the summer.

Chair Helm requested that the Board enter a nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(a): "The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee..."

Roll call vote: Kidder: yes; Casey: yes ; Helm: yes

The Board entered nonpublic session at 7:15 PM.

The Board reentered the public session at 7:55 PM.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Bebe Casey) to seal the minutes of the nonpublic session. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF PAY VOUCHERS, PERMITS etc.

Items to be signed:

- Payroll Authorization Vouchers and Account Payables
- Warrant for Dog License Civil Forfeiture
- Application to Use Town Property – AARP Foundation Tax Aides (Whipple Memorial Hall, January 6th, 7th & 8th, 9:00am-5:00pm)
- Yield Tax Warrant – John Brown and Sons Inc. Timber Operation #23-335-01-T
- Birthday cards

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Building/Zoning Permits – Approved

- Daniel Coolidge, TM 030-008-0-0-0, BP22-35E, extension of BP22-35 – Approved 6/18/24
- Michael & Anita Tuttle, TM 058-032-0-0-0, BP24-36, installation of 10kW generator on concrete pad – Approved 6/17/24
- Rebecca & Thomas Emery, TM 117-020-0-0-0, BP24-37, exterior renovations including new siding, windows and converting existing deck into sunroom – Approved 6/17/24
- Shanshan Chen & Michael Esposito, TM 084-049-0-0-0, BP24-38, replace and expand footprint of existing deck
- Justin & Ann Bullion, TM 035-026-0-0-0, BP24-40, Roof mount solar 5.584 kW with battery backup
- Martha L Cassidy Trust, TM 110-014-0-0-0, BP24-41, Exterior renovations including new siding and a new basement window
- Cindy Daley Rev Trust, TM 081-009-0-0-0, BP24-43, 12' x 32' uninsulated pole barn

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Cara Leone
Recording Secretary
Town of New London

Note: 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.