



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 8, 2026
Whipple Memorial Town Hall
5:30 PM

PRESENT:

Bebe Hammond Casey, Chairman
Janet Kidder, Selectman
Richard Anderson, Selectman
Ashley Seybold, Town Administrator
Lynn Lewis, Finance Officer

ALSO PRESENT:

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Will Kidder, TC/TC | Mark Vernon |
| Chief Cobb | John Ellis |
| Putnam Kidder, Recreation Director | Michael Todd |
| Rob Prohl | Emily Campbell |
| Bob Brown | Art Scutro |
| Tom Forester | Tom Flynn |
| Mike Gelcius | Bob Bowers |
| Tom Miller | Rich Epstein |
| Tom Forester | Karen Epstein |
| Peter Nichols | Charlie Kelsey |

Chair Casey called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Michael Todd - Scytheville Elkins Sesquicentennial Association Donation

- **Discussion:** Michael Todd presented a proposal for the town of New London to accept a donation of \$31654.28 by warrant article from the dissolved Scytheville Elkins Sesquicentennial Association. The funds are earmarked specifically for continuing Sunday afternoon concerts at the Elkins bandstand, as per the organization's bylaws. The organization's board members have aged out, resulting in the organization's dissolution. The town already owns the bandstand property. Ashley Seybold, Town Administrator, asked for clarification on a plan to continue providing music at the bandstand. Mr. Todd shared that it would likely be the Board of the Town of New London Bandstand Committee Inc. that would schedule performers for both New London and Elkins, but that would need to be approved by that board. Money would be requested only from the appropriate fund to support the programming. Selectman Kidder asked what would happen if the money ran out. Mr. Todd explained that unless the funds were managed to last as long as possible, the performances would no longer be provided, or there could be an opportunity for the Town of New London Bandstand Committee Inc. to provide financial support if the board voted to do so.

- **Decision:** The townspeople need to authorize the Board of Selectmen to receive these funds and place them with the trustees of trust funds. A warrant article, drafted and approved by the town council, will be presented at the town meeting for this purpose. The funds are solely for hiring bands, not for bandstand maintenance.
- **Action Items/Commitments:**
 - **Michael Todd:** Work with the Elkins Bandstand Committee to schedule concerts, ensuring no conflict with Friday night concerts on the town common. Present the plan to the committee for approval at their annual meeting.
 - **Ashley:** Talk to Joe to confirm the correct fund type (trust, not capital reserve) for the donation.
 - **Town (Voters):** Vote on the warrant article at town meeting to authorize acceptance of the funds.

Emily Campbell, Bike and Pedestrian Committee Appointment

- **Discussion:** Emily Campbell from the Bike and Pedestrian Committee requested the appointment of Mike Ryan as an alternate member, replacing Erica Brown. Grant Smith, formerly an alternate, has agreed to become a full member.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Richard Anderson) to appoint Mike Ryan as an alternate member to the Bike and Pedestrian Committee. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Tom Flynn & Art Scutro - Westside Drive Speed Limit Concerns

- **Discussion:** Tom Flynn and Art Scutro, Westside Drive residents, discussed the recent change in speed limit on Route 11 (George's Mills to Crescent Bog) from 50 mph to 45 mph. They highlighted three recent accidents in the area, arguing that 45 mph is still too high, especially given that accidents occurred in existing 35 mph zones. They requested monitoring devices and warning signs, similar to those on Route 11. The Department of Transportation (DOT) based its decision on a rulebook without fully considering other factors, such as roadway environment and crash experience.
- **Current Status:** DOT has implemented the 45 mph limit and will monitor its effectiveness. The town had previously paved the shoulder in this area.
- **Action Items/Commitments:**
 - **Chief Cobb:** Research the cost of speed feedback signs (digital signs displaying vehicle speed) for the area and provide a quote.
 - **Police Department:** Increase speed enforcement in the area.
 - **Ashley:** Follow up with Art Scutro on the cost of the speed feedback signs.
 - **Ashley:** Get this information into municipal matters and social media to educate residents on the speed change.

Bob Brown, Conservation Commission Projects and Goals

- **Discussion:** Bob Brown, Chair of the Conservation Commission, presented four key projects from the Conservation Commission.
 - **Low Plains Wildlife Management Area Annexation:** A warrant article is needed to annex 54 acres to the existing 169-acre Low Plains Wildlife Management Area, increasing its size by 50%. This land was difficult to acquire and is the last contiguous parcel without a house. New Hampshire Fish and Game will hold the conservation easement and has waived the stewardship fee. The Conservation Commission believes a warrant article is needed because of the loss of potential tax value (even though the town already owns it). The warrant article has been drafted and delivered to the Town Council for review.

- **Forest & Wildlife Habitat Improvement Projects:** A warrant article is requested to share net profits (up to 50%, not exceeding \$7,000) from timber harvests on town forests (at Low Plains and at Philips Preserve) with the Conservation Commission. This revenue would fund projects like parking area improvements (e.g., the \$4,000 Andover Road parking lot project at Low Plains). This is similar to a prior approved warrant article.
- **Ohler Property Conservation Easement Contribution:** The Conservation Commission voted to contribute \$50,000 towards the purchase of a conservation easement on the 100-acre Ohler property on Pleasant Street, managed by Ausbon Sargent. This project aims to conserve the land, including trails and brooks that feed Pleasant Lake. Initially, it was believed that a warrant article was not needed, but further clarification (consulted DRA and the town attorney) indicated that a public hearing is required, though not a warrant article, under RSA 36-84-A1B.
- **Mountain Road Parcel 101-000-003 Assignment:** Request to permanently assign the 30-acre Parcel 101-000-003 on Mountain Road to the Conservation Commission for management as conservation land. The parcel is near the landfill and was previously considered for a transfer station, but it is unsuitable due to power requirements and terrain. The Conservation Commission successfully managed a timber harvest there in 2019, resulting in its certification as a tree farm.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Richard Anderson) Motion to move Lot 101-000-003 from general town ownership to conservation under the management of the New London Conservation Commission. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

- Bob Brown reiterated the need for a long-term plan for the land acquisition fund, potentially exploring fundraising or other strategies.

Action Items/Commitments: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

OLD BUSINESS

Energy Commission Capital Reserve

- **Discussion:** The Energy Commission is requesting an additional \$100,000 for their capital reserve, bringing the total to \$150,000 (currently \$50,000). This is for 20% deposits on two solar array projects (transfer station and Mountain Road), each estimated at \$425,000. The projects have potential 30% rebates and time constraints. The Board discussed the timing of this request with the budget committee.
Charles Kelsey, Chair of the Budget Committee - Motion to the budget committee for a revised capital reserve allocation, considering the 20% deposit requirement and potential operating monies needed, but not necessarily the full \$150,000. Conduct further math and consult with the finance officer.
- **Board of Selectmen:** Reconcile the request with the budget committee at the January 28th meeting.

COLA Discussion

- **Discussion:** Town Administrator Ashley Seybold clarified Selectman Anderson's prior stance on employee compensation and acknowledged her own misrepresentation. Rich Anderson advocated a 4% total increase for employees, comprising a COLA based on the New England CPI (expected 2.5-3.5%) and an additional 1% to buffer against higher inflation. For employees not on a step program (2 of 44), a 3% COLA would apply. Chair Casey reiterated her position to maintain the current 5.5% total increase (3% COLA + 2.5% step increase) for this year, emphasizing fairness and predictability, and committed to a comprehensive review of the compensation package (including vacation and sick time) over the next year. All selectmen expressed concerns about the long-term sustainability of budget growth and the need for a structured compensation policy.
 - **Decision:** The Board decided not to vote again, acknowledging each other's positions and agreeing to move forward with the established compensation plan for this year.
 - **Action Items/Commitments:**
 - **Ashley:** Tasked with leading a comprehensive review of the town's compensation package, including vacation time, sick time, and recommendations from previous consultants (MRI), with department heads, to develop a sustainable and predictable policy for the future.

NEW BUSINESS

Putnam Kidder, Recreation Director - Spelling Bee Alcohol Permit

- **Discussion:** Putnam, Recreation Director, requested permission to serve alcohol (beer and wine) at the Winter Carnival Spelling Bee fundraiser on Saturday, February 7th, at Whipple Hall. This is a recurring request for a successful event.

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) **AND SECONDED** (Richard Anderson) to allow alcohol (beer and wine) to be served in Whipple Hall at the Winter Carnival Spelling Bee event on Saturday, February 7th. **THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Lynn Lewis, Finance Director - Capital Reserve Withdrawals (53:24)

- **Discussion:** Lynn requested two withdrawals from Capital Reserves:
 - **Sidewalk Capital Reserve: \$58,634.29 for sidewalk maintenance, slightly under the planned \$60,000.**

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) **AND SECONDED** (Richard Anderson) to approve the withdrawal of \$58,634.29 from the Sidewalk Capital Reserve account. **THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- **Computer Maintenance Fund: \$1,650 to replace Putnam's outdated desktop computer with a new laptop.**

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) **AND SECONDED** (Richard Anderson) to withdraw \$1,650 from the computer maintenance fund. **THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Chief Cobb, Police Chief - Police Cruiser Accident Update

Discussion: Chief Cobb reported that an officer was involved in a cruiser accident on December 27th due to weather conditions. The officer is fine, but the cruiser (a Charger) is likely totaled. An appraiser will assess the damage. This leaves the department down a cruiser, as the new Tahoe is still being built and the old one stripped. The command vehicle and police truck are being used more frequently.

- **Action Items/Commitments:**

- **Chief Cobb:** Provide an update to the Board once the appraisal is received and a plan for replacing the cruiser is determined.

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Ice Storm Follow-up

- **Discussion:** Ashley reported on the recent ice storm, noting 60% of the town lost power, with four houses out for 24 hours. The town's response was effective, thanks to coordination with Eversource and town departments. Generators at the Buker Building, the Academy Building, and George's Mills sewer failed but were restored, and a known issue with the academy generator is being addressed. Public Works is continuing debris cleanup.
- **Action Items/Commitments:**
 - **Ashley:** Conduct an after-incident report/meeting on January 21st to review the storm response and identify points of failure.

2025 Non-Public Meeting Minutes Review

- **Discussion:** Ashley and Chair Casey reviewed all non-public meeting minutes from 2025, identifying 5-7 to be made public. The rest will remain sealed. The last time such a review occurred is unclear, so Ashley will consult with Kim.
- **Action Items/Commitments:**
 - **Ashley:** Work with Casey to make the identified minutes public within the next week.
 - **Ashley:** Consult with Kim to determine the last comprehensive review and ensure an annual review process is established.

2025 Warrant Articles

- **Discussion:** Ashley confirmed that several warrant articles have been discussed, and Lynn has updated standard articles. A new topic is House Bill 737, which allows Keno and other games of chance in towns and requires municipalities to opt out via two separate warrant articles.
- **Action Items/Commitments:**
 - **Ashley:** Provide the Board with a draft of warrant articles for review.
 - **Ashley:** Provide the draft language for the Keno and games of chance opt-out articles for discussion at the January 21st meeting to determine the Board's stance.

COLA Update

- **Discussion:** Taking a portion of the Department Head meeting to discuss the entire compensation package to present back to the Board of Selectmen

Dispatch Study Update

- **Discussion:** The dispatch study, previously delayed, will begin with the drafting of an RFP next week or the week after. Community-submitted RFP questions will be reviewed. Meetings are being scheduled with the four towns that receive dispatching services to inform them of the study. The study aims to examine operational efficiency and cost models, potentially considering regional dispatch centers. The Board reiterated that no public committee will be formed; an expert firm will be hired to conduct the study.

- **Action Items/Commitments:**
 - **Ashley & Chief Cobb:** Begin drafting the RFP for the dispatch study, incorporating community input and focusing on operational efficiency and cost models.
 - **Ashley & Chief Cobb:** Schedule and hold meetings with the four towns receiving dispatch services in late January.

Rich Epstein, a resident, asked whether there would be a public committee to influence the information. Mr. Epstein pointed to himself as someone with experience to share on this topic. Chair Casey clarified for Mr. Epstein that this is similar to issuing an RFP to commission a study of our operations, with an expert providing their recommendations. Afterward, there may be a public forum to disseminate that information.

Update on speed change

- **Discussion:** 45 miles per hour from south of Great Pines to Georges Mills
- **Action Items/Commitments:** Working on finding ways to make residents aware of the change.

APPROVAL OF PAY VOUCHERS, PERMITS, etc.

Items to be signed:

- Payroll Authorization Vouchers and Accounts Payable
 - December 23, 2025
 - December 31, 2025
 - January 8, 2026
 - January 15, 2026
- Indemnification Agreement between PLPA and Town of New London

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Building/Zoning Permits – Approved

- Lucas Carey – Columbus Ave – 081-008-000 – BP 25-124
- Wayne & Daryl Arsenault – 173 Squires Lane – 096-029-000 – BP 25-126
- David Kaminski – 87 Old Main St. – 107-004-000 – BP 25-127

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Casey Biuso
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.

