



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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NEW LONDON BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 5, 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:

John Ellis	Will Kidder, Town Clerk and
Colin Beasley	Bob Brown, Conservation Commission
Bob Bowers	Sue Andrews
Tom Foerster	Mark Vernon
Amy Battles	Rob Prohl

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

Public Hearing – Proposed donation by the Conservation Commission to Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust (ASLPT)

Pursuant to RSA 36-A:4-a, I(b), the New London Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, February 5, 2026 at 5:30 pm at Whipple Memorial Town Hall, 25 Seamans Road, New London, New Hampshire, to review and receive public comment on a proposed donation by the Conservation Commission to Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust (ASLPT) for the purpose of acquiring a conservation easement on the Ohler Property (048-002-001) on Pleasant Street. The proposed donation would support the property's permanent protection by acquiring a conservation easement held by ASLPT.

- Purpose: The New London Conservation Commission (NLCC) seeks approval for a \$50,000 pledge from the town's land acquisitions fund for a conservation easement on the 100-acre Ohler Farm property (Parcel 048-021). The easement will be held by the Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust.
- Significance: This property is contiguous with other conserved lands (Brook Woods, Messer Farm, Spring Ledge Farm), creating a 300-acre protected area. It also protects Pleasant Lake due to White Brook and Red Brook flowing through it.
- Funding Model: The conservation easement value is \$700,000. Ausbon Sargent is actively seeking donations and requested a pledge from the NLCC. This is a different approach than outright town purchase, making it more affordable.

- NLCC Pledge: The NLCC has pledged \$50,000 from the land acquisition fund.
- Discussion Points:
 - BOS Authority: There was a question about whether the NLCC needs BOS permission to expend funds on the land acquisition account. The NLCC representative stated they approve amounts, then seek BOS permission.
 - Increased Pledge: A BOS member (Bebe) recommended increasing the pledge to \$100,000, noting Ausbon Sargent is close to their fundraising goal.
 - Land Acquisition Fund Concerns: The NLCC expressed reluctance to deplete the fund because of past replenishment difficulties and the current lack of support from the BOS and Budget Committee for future donations. The current balance is \$396,000.
 - Mary Hadad Fund: The Mary Hadad Fund was considered, but it's restricted to land purchases (requiring the town to be on the deed), making it ineligible for this easement.
 - Future Collaboration: The BOS encouraged continued collaboration with Ausbon Sargent on future conservation projects.
 - Public Comment: Sue Andrews of Ausbon Sargent stated that she expects the organization to reach its \$700,000 goal, likely in the second or third quarter. They are pursuing grants, which introduces some uncertainty. The Board of Selectmen confirmed their support should Ausbon Sargent need to request further funds from the Conservation Commission.
- Commitments:
 - NLCC: Will proceed with the \$50,000 pledge and communicate with Ausbon Sargent regarding the project timeline and any potential need for additional funds if grant applications are unsuccessful.

Chair Casey called the meeting to order at 5:43 PM.

Sam Clarke - DPW Building Demolition

- **Status:** The old highway department building is ready for demolition, and the asbestos abatement is complete.
- **Timeline:** Demolition is planned sometime between February 23rd and March 6th. Final submissions to DES are due next week.
- **Consultant Meeting:** The first meeting with Wieman Lamphere (design and engineering firm) went well. They understood the town's concerns.
- **New Building Status:** The replacement building is still in early stages, with Wieman Lamphere collecting inventory, space needs, and site information (survey, easements, property lines). No concept design, sizes, or costs are available yet.
- **Vehicle Lift/Pit Discussion:** There have been internal discussions at DPW about a hydraulic lift or a pit for vehicle servicing, with safety being a key consideration. Pits are being explored.
- **Safety Protocols:**
 - Areas will be barricaded off during demolition to prevent public access.
 - The fire department will be present to hose down the building if it's overly dry to prevent dust.

- **Neighbor Notification:** It was suggested to notify neighbors, though it's not legally required.
- **Action Items/Commitments:**
 - **Ashley Seybold and Sam Clark:** Will follow up on notifying neighbors for the demolition.

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Ashley Seybold - Dispatch Study

- Current Status: Still in "Step One: Meetings." Chief Cobb and Ashley are meeting with towns receiving dispatch services and police officers/current dispatch staff to inform them about the study.
- Next Steps: Draft the RFP next week, then publish it for public viewing on the website. Submissions will be available at town offices.
- BOS Role: The BOS will review and approve the RFP, select the consultant, and ultimately evaluate findings and determine next steps.
- Public Involvement:
 - RFP will be discussed publicly at a BOS meeting.
 - Selection vote will be public.
 - Findings will be presented publicly.
 - At least one working session for Q&A with the consultant before decisions are made.
 - The consultant will be asked to recommend a public engagement plan (similar to the police study).
- BOS Expectations – Chair Casey
 - Financial Analysis:
 - Clear baseline of current regional dispatch center finances, cost model, and allocation across towns.
 - Side-by-side comparison of costs from other regional centers (including transition costs, contract terms, required changes).
 - Explanation of what happens to frequency, signal, and infrastructure if the current center closes (ownership, repurposing, remaining costs).
 - Comparison to peer regional dispatch centers (fees, cost-sharing, scale).
 - Operational Analysis:
 - Objective review of staffing, roles, coverage, training, scheduling, space needs, and technology.
 - Analysis of call protocols (911 vs. local numbers, answer paths, transfers, queuing, time to dispatch).
 - Specific assessment of "split dispatch" (if police, fire, and ambulance have to go to different dispatch centers).
 - Radio interoperability and patching.
 - Outcomes: Consultant to present options with pros and cons (keeping/improving current model, partial regionalization, full regionalization), including five-year total cost of ownership, service level impacts, risks, and implementation roadmap.
- Selectman Anderson: Emphasized the need for a high level of detail in the study and a clear expectation of the consultants to avoid "fluff." Suggested explicitly stating in the RFP that all bullet points must be addressed and that the town will be the sole judge of adequacy.
- Ashley's Responses:
 - Questions for the RFP should be submitted now; Chief Cobb and Ashley are drafting it for the next BOS meeting.
 - Consultant will be an unbiased entity with no stake in New London.

- The town has allocated \$30,000 for the study.
- It's not standard practice to present consultants with two different versions of the RFP based on budget; they will create the RFP, and consultants will propose.
- The consultant would primarily interact with Chief Cobb and Ashley, but also likely with other towns, the hospital, and potentially the BOS and fire department leadership.
- Public input during the study is possible.
- Public input directly into the final RFP is not standard practice for the town.

Town Report Update

- Status: All reports are submitted except for the warrant, which is awaiting final tweaks with the DRA.
- Binding: Unsure if it will be spiral-bound or perfect-bound, but spiral-bound is likely due to the late budget season. There's still a small window for perfect binding.
- Edits: Minimal edits have been made to reports.
- Timeline: Lynn has tasks once the warrant is returned from the DRA, then it will go to press.
- Action Items/Commitments:
 - Lynn: Will finalize tasks once the warrant is received from the DRA.

250th US Birthday Celebration

- **Historical Context:** 1976 (200th birthday) had significant federal/state funding, which is not available now.
- **Current Efforts:** Few towns are planning large events. Many will have larger fireworks displays.
- **New London Plans:**
 - Jim brought up a commemorative flag from 1976, which will be displayed.
 - Consider using patriotic purposes funds (approx. \$300, typically goes to VFW) to purchase 250th commemorative flags (\$50-75 each) to fly alongside regular flags.
 - Tracy Memorial Library and First Baptist Church (meeting house) will have their own 200th-anniversary celebrations.
 - Pleasant Lake Protective Association will have its standard fireworks show.
 - New London Historical Society is also planning an event.
- **Future Planning:** New London's 250th birthday is in 2029, and a committee for that event is recommended.
- **Action Items/Commitments:**
 - **Ashley:** Will gather information on all 250th-related events and potentially dedicate a Municipal Matters issue to it. Will consult with Lynn regarding the use of patriotic purposes funds for flags.

Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center Heart and Vascular Clinic

- Offering: DHMC is offering free Heart and Vascular clinics to towns across NH.
- New London Hosting: New London will host a clinic at Whipple Hall on Friday, June 12th, in the morning.
- Details: DHMC will bring staff; the town will market the event.

Bog Road Land Donation

- Background: A family on Bog Road donated a sliver of land to the town, which was voted on and passed at the 2019 town meeting.

- Status: The process has been complex but is nearing completion. Draft deeds have been sent to the property owner and Ausbon Sargent.
- Next Steps: Once approved, the deeds will go to the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation for signing, then will be signed by the Board of Selectmen
- Outcome: The land (less than an acre, a "weird triangle" between Messer Pond and Clark Pond) will become part of the conservation land on Bog Road.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Colin Beasley, resident – Regarding the Dispatch Study:

- Emphasized the importance of open discussion and community education.
- Clarified that the study is not about eliminating 526-2626 calls.
- Suggested documenting future volumes and cost structures, including best practices and benchmarking.
- Asked about operational continuity in disaster scenarios.
- Clarification on split dispatch complexity due to geographical challenges.
- Recommended identifying actions New London could take to improve efficiency and cost model if maintaining its own center.
- Stressed the RFP shouldn't be finalized until this discussion occurs and the public understands the BOS's thinking.

John Ellis, resident

- Asked if his submitted questions had been reviewed by Chief Cobb and Ashley.
- Inquired about adding public questions to the final RFP before consultant selection.
- Asked if the consultant would provide multiple proposals (e.g., a \$30,000 version and a \$50,000 version with more questions).
- Questioned who the consultant would have access to for information gathering.
- Expressed concern about public input after consultant selection, beyond public meetings.

Tom Foerster, resident

- Echoed concerns about "fluff" in RFP responses and emphasized the need for clarity on expectations for detail.
- Suggested that oral presentations from potential consultants (as done for DPW) are a key part of the RFP process and should be included.
- Advised that the RFP should allow for follow-up questions and deeper analysis beyond the initial list, preventing consultants from claiming "it wasn't part of the original scope."

OLD BUSINESS

Cruiser Replacement

- Incident: A cruiser was totaled in an accident in December.
- Funding: Insurance money will be received.
- Funding sources for replacement:
 - Paving line item (Sam is willing to allocate funds).
 - Welfare line item (money available due to an unhired part-time role).
 - Town Vehicle and Equipment Repair Capital Reserve (Lynn and Ashley are checking with Trustees of the Trust Funds Chair, Joe Kubit, on eligibility).
- Vehicle Status: It was one of the older cruisers, but not the oldest; it would have been replaced in the near future, but not this year or next.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS & REPORTS

- **Budget Committee (Joint Meeting – January 30, 2026):**
 - Main Disagreement: Adding an additional full-time firefighter in the 2027 budget. The Board of Selectmen opposes, the Budget Committee supports.
 - Volunteer Incentive Funding: The Budget Committee voted 5-4 against adding \$25,000 to incentivize volunteers (advertisements, EMT training, weekend stipends).
 - Outcome: Board of Selectmen voted 2-1 to reduce the budget by \$20,000 as per the Budget Committee request, narrowing the discrepancy for town meeting discussion.
- **Firewards Meeting (January 26, 2026):**
 - 1,090 fire responses in 2025.
 - Equipment: Cab and chassis for the tanker not yet delivered.
 - Staffing: Six candidates to be interviewed for an open budgeted position. Internal posting for the Fire Chief position.
- **Planning Board (January 27, 2026):**
 - Proposed three zoning amendments for ADUs, institutional districts, and cottage court housing, along with a change to the definition of family, to be voted on at town meeting.
- **New London Springfield Water Precinct (January 29, 2026):**
 - Logging around the tank and pond. The tank needs repair.
 - Usage: January usage was up (6.127 million gallons vs. 5.7 million in Jan 2025).
 - Main Street Project: Not financially closed, still issues, funds in reserve.
 - Budget: Health insurance up 4.9%. Roof repair is needed on the office and the pump station.
 - Pumps: Pumps 1, 2, and 5 off Colby Point to be inspected.
 - Leak: Leak at Hilltop Place was expensive.
 - Lease: Cleveland's lease at Colby Point is good until 2030.

MEETING MINUTES:

IT WAS MOVED (Janet Kidder) AND SECONDED (Richard Anderson) to accept the minutes of the 1/8/26 and 1/22/26 meetings. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

OTHER BUSINESS:

APPROVAL OF PAY VOUCHERS, PERMITS etc.

- Request for Disbursement

Items to be signed:

- Payroll Authorization Vouchers and Accounts Payable

Applications Approved &/or Denied

Building/Zoning Permits – Approved

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Application for property tax credit/exemption

- Solar Exemption - Scott & Cheryl Devoe – 84 Woodland Trace – 094-025-000 Approved
- Solar Exemption -Michael & Lisa Rubenberg – 142Sargent Rd – 086-010-000 Approved
- Solar Exemption – Jessie Carman – 12 Dogwood Ln – 074-022-000 Approved

Application for Raffle Permit for Charitable Organization – Approved

- Elkins Fish and Game Club - Raffle Permit – December 1, 2026

Application to Use New London Town Property – Approved

- New London Hospital – Whipple Hall, Town Common & Bandstand, New London Inn Common – July 28, 2026 – 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM – Hospital Days
- Ladies Left of Center – Whipple Hall – 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM – Education Session “Words, Values. Bridging Our Political Divides”

NONPUBLIC: The Board of Selectmen may enter into nonpublic session, if so voted, to discuss items listed under RSA 91-A:3, II.

IT WAS MOVED (Kidder) AND SECONDED (Anderson) to enter into a nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (d): the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee.

Roll call vote: Casey- Yea; Kidder-Yea; Richardson- Yea

The Board entered nonpublic session at 6:35 PM.

The Board reentered the public session at 7:28 PM.

IT WAS MOVED (Kidder) AND SECONDED (Anderson) to seal the nonpublic session meeting minutes. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

IT WAS MOVED (Kidder) AND SECONDED (Anderson) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Casey Biuso
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.