

**Town of Newport
Board of Selectmen
6:30 pm Special Meeting
Board of Selectmen's Room/Municipal Building
Minutes for July 27, 2015**

SELECTMEN PRESENT: Gary Nichols, Chairman; Todd Fratzel, Vice Chairman; David Hoyt, William Wilmot, Jeff Kessler

STAFF PRESENT: Shane P. O'Keefe, Newport Town Manager; Fire Chief Wayne Conroy, Captain/Paramedic Ken Carleton, head of Newport EMS Division

PUBLIC PRESENT:

New London Hospital (NLH): Steven Powell, MD, MPH, CPE Chief of Emergency Services; Richard Riley, Paramedic, Ambulance & EMS Coordinator, NLH; Pam Drewniack, EMS Coordinator, NLH; Sally Patton, Chief of Nursing NLH; Donald Griffin, Chief Financial Officer, New London Hospital

Town of New London: Nancy Rollins, Chairman, New London Board of Selectmen; Peter Bianchi, Selectman; Kim Hallquist, New London Town Administrator

Town of Sunapee: Daniel Ruggles, Fire Chief/EMS

Town of Newbury: Henry Thomas, Fire Chief/ EMS

Chairman Nichols opened the meeting at 6:39 pm.

Town of Newport
Board of Selectmen
July 27, 2015

The Town of Newport Board of Selectmen will meet at 6:30 on Monday, July 27, 2015 in the Board of Selectmen's meeting room, 15 Sunapee Street to discuss New London Ambulance Service's request to reinstate Newport Fire/EMS the providing of backup ambulance service to NLAS territory.
(Notice typed verbatim)

Chairman Nichols stated that the purpose of the meeting was to have a discussion with New London ambulance based at New London Hospital as well as with represented towns. He introduced the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager, Mr. Shane O'Keefe.

Representatives from New London Hospital, the Towns of New London, Sunapee, Newbury and Newport introduced themselves.

Dr. Steven Powell, Chief of Emergency Services at New London Hospital, addressed the Newport Board of Selectmen (BOS) and stated that they were present at the July 27, 2015 meeting to ask the BOS where they stood on the subject of mutual aid. Because they had not heard from Newport, he had spoken to Mr. Paul Brown during the past the week and had asked for clarification as to where the Newport Board stood on continuing mutual aid to towns after the July 1, 2015 BOS revised deadline decision.

Continuing, Dr. Powell stressed that he wanted a clarification of where Newport stood. His concern was the safety of the community. He didn't want to have or hear 'grey' areas. He wanted it in black and white (yes or no). Grey areas were dangerous to the anticipated patient and the communities, he stated. What New London was trying to do was formulate an EMS or ambulance response/business plan based on what the Town of Newport was going to do. Not knowing what Newport was planning had made it difficult to formulate and build an accurate business plan. He acknowledged Mr. Rich Riley.

Mr. Rich Riley, Ambulance & EMS Coordinator; addressed the Newport Board of Selectmen. He stated that per their agreement with the Newport BOS (taken from minutes of the February 24, 2015 meeting: On a motion by Selectman Fratzel, seconded by Selectman Hoyt; *the Board voted to extend existing levels of EMS service to the NLAS coverage area to 06.30.15 based upon the commitment from the New London Hospital to staff a second ambulance from 9 AM to 9 PM seven days a week. The motion passed 5-0-0.*) they had honored their commitment and increased the number of ambulances and personnel to reduce reliance on Newport mutual aid. He gave the statistical facts of sixteen (16) mutual aids to Newport (by NLAS) vs eight (8) mutual aids to New London (by Newport). Explaining, he stated that was calendar year and included paramedic intercepts and straight mutual aid (ambulance coverage).

He also stated that New London Hospital wanted a better relationship with Newport. The changes that had been made in New London were to get both services on an "even playing field". New London had been able to accomplish a reduction of the need for assistance from Newport.

Mr. Riley explained the steps the New London Hospital ambulance service (NLAS) had taken to maintain the agreed upon level of service, to the extent that they had turned down revenue-making transports to various locations in order to maintain the agreed upon commitment (with Newport). Addressing the Chair, he gave numbers of paramedic transports given to the Newport Ambulance and the number of calls that Newport had in return given to the New London ambulance.

Dr. Powell addressed the Newport Board of Selectmen. He stated that before their revamping of the EMS department, Newport was giving 2-1 mutual aid assists. Since their changes, New London had been giving 2-1 mutual aid assists. Dr. Powell reiterated that he did not know where Newport BOS stood on mutual assists (he stated he was not including Lempster in the discussion) and would like it clarified.

Chairman Nichols stated that since the February 24, 2015 meeting, Lempster, NH had contracted with Golden Cross ambulance. He gave the EMS names in descending order as to backup coverage in Lempster. Selectman Kessler stated that Newport answered calls to Lempster because Newport EMS backed up Golden Cross.

Chairman Nichols spoke on distances ambulances had to travel for calls.

Selectman Wilmot asked why the flip (numbers for mutual aid between Newport and NLAS).

Dr. Powell briefly explained how NLAS worked. He explained the additional staffing and ambulances and how it has lowered the reliance on Newport.

Selectman Wilmot asked if the flip (in additional mutual aid by NLAS) was a result of added staff and unit.

Mr. Riley stated yes and gave more detailed information on staffing. He reiterated that they had terminated many transports to various locations in order to maintain the agreed upon commitment (with Newport). Continuing, Mr. Riley said he knew he had to show adherence to their commitment if they were going to go back to Newport and have an open dialogue on mutual aid.

Addressing the Chair, he stated that Newport/New London were very close. He expressed a need to have a good working relationship. Mr. Riley listed the mutual aid benefits that New London had to offer Newport (example paramedic intercepts) and wanted to continue to be able to provide them.

Chairman Nichols addressed Captain Carleton and asked if his numbers matched the ones given by Mr. Riley. He stated they were similar.

Selectman Hoyt asked for a list of the towns which New London gave mutual aid to.

Mr. Riley again addressed Chairman Nichols and stated that New London Hospital currently served seven area towns: New London, Wilmot, Springfield, Sutton, Newbury and Sunapee. He stated that they also served Andover as needed. They will provide backup services to Grantham. Chairman Nichols questioned that. Mr. Riley told Chairman Nichols they would not refuse anyone who called who needed an ambulance, from any surrounding town.

Selectman Hoyt asked if their rule was to provide one ambulance per town or one ambulance (to share) for all the towns.

Mr. Riley explained one ambulance is funded by the towns 24/7. The second ambulance was available eight (8) hours a day for a 9-1-1 call (80% not being used as transfer vehicle). NLAS had now increased staffing to twelve (12) hours a day. It was a substantial monetary increase.

Dr. Powell explained further.

Selectman Hoyt asked if there were contracts with the towns. Mr. Riley stated that some towns did and also explained that for some there were no contracts; only agreements (a handshake). He was asked if the towns paid for their services. He was told yes. Dr. Powell and Mr. Riley stated they had been flexible to meet the needs of the towns.

Chairman Nichols addressed the representatives present and stated that the NLAS and other towns wanted Newport to go back to the way it had been (with mutual aid coverage).

Dr. Powell stated that they wanted to be able to rely on Newport EMS for mutual aid coverage. He maintained that it had to be the Newport Board of Selectmen's decision. He wanted clarity. A worst case scenario was if a NLAS ambulance was on a call and Newport EMS would not respond. People would get hurt. He reiterated that he needed clarity in order to go to the Town of New London and explain what they (New London) would need to do in response to the Newport Board of Selectmen's decision.

Chairman Nichols addressed Dr. Powell and said that the Newport Board members had not discussed the issue since the initial decisions. He stated there were different opinions on the subject. He then gave information concerning five (5) years previously and again more recently (see minutes from special meeting February 24, 2015 for details) on the NLAS, the Newport EMS division, housemen at Newport and current volunteerism. He cited the staffing problems in Newport and surrounding ambulance squads.

Chairman Nichols addressed Captain Carleton and asked him to explain Newport's staffing. Captain Carleton stated Newport was staffing one ambulance 24/7. The second and third calls are staffed by call personnel. Ninety percent (90%) of the time Newport staffed the second and third ambulance (Newport has done four, five and six calls all in a very short span of time). Newport relied on call personnel to accomplish this.

Dr. Powell addressed the Newport BOS and gave some benefits of having mutual aid with NLAS. He told them that they could guarantee a paramedic on every ambulance run. That would give the patient the highest level of care until he/she arrived at a hospital. Chairman Nichols asked Captain Carleton how many paramedics Newport currently had. He stated one fulltime paramedic would be available (Newport had three ambulances).

Dr. Powell asked Mr. Riley how many paramedics New London had. He was told 21. Addressing the Board, Dr. Powell stated that the relationship between New London and Newport was important. Dr. Powell stated that as an Emergency Department doctor he knew that Newport was not calling for paramedic intercepts and that hurt the patients. He didn't want that to happen. He again asked the Newport Board of Selectmen for clarity.

Chairman Nichols reiterated the Newport Board stand that they had seen an unhealthy climb of mutual aid requests from NLAS. He then reiterated his explanations of the Board members actions.

Chairman Nichols stated it would be good to have a conversation on effective coverage and what towns wanted and expected. The Chair stated he would like to have the assurance that NLAS would provide and that Newport could reciprocate in some respect, but one of his concerns was there was a history of the same scenario with staffing and ambulance availability (because of budgets).

Dr. Powell stated that New London ambulance is affiliated with New London Hospital. Half of the patients come from the town of Newport. He stated that many times that the NLAS ambulance was out it was out taking one of Newport's citizens for critical care. It was difficult to believe that the Newport BOS would complain about that. NLAS could talk finances: many services charge for paramedic intercepts (\$600). He did not want to do that to Newport-with Newport's budget. NLAS was trying to avoid charging fees (like that). He stated that he doubted Captain Carleton would call NLAS as much for a paramedic intercept (if Newport was charged \$600). He reminded the Board that recently a Newport ambulance was down for repairs; New London drove one of theirs over to cover the area at no charge. If the Board of Selectmen wanted to talk financial arrangements he (Dr. Powell) would sit down with them. He reminded the Board that what had happened in 2008-9 was painful for NLAS and Newport.

Selectman Fratzel stated that NLAS served many towns with one ambulance. Newport citizens were staffing one plus (1+) ambulances. NLAS had come and asked for help (to be NLAS's backup). Selectman Fratzel stated the other towns were not paying their fair share. He reiterated his reasons (from previous meetings) for Newport EMS to not assist.

Dr. Powell addressed Selectman Fratzel and asked if he knew of the NLAS third ambulance. He redirected his question to the Chair. Mr. Riley began to explain their third ambulance. Selectman Fratzel interrupted him. Selectman Fratzel reiterated views (from previous meetings) that he felt the other communities should purchase and man their own ambulances.

Mr. Riley again addressed the Board and explained the operational structure the New London ambulance had looked into in order to provide the best care to its NLAS patients. There had been three options. He explained each in detail.

Mr. Riley then explained fully to Selectman Fratzel and the Board how the NLAS ambulances and staffing were positioned. He explained scenarios in which New London Hospital might request a 9-1-1 call and what would be done.

There was an intense discussion by Board members and representatives. Selectman Kessler stated that he objected to the representatives saying that ½ the patients at NLH were from Newport. They (NLH) were a business. There was a short discussion on this.

Mr. Riley addressed Selectman Kessler and stated that only two hospitals in the state of NH had a hospital- based ambulance service. New London was one. He explained.

Dr. Powell addressed Town Manager O'Keefe and stated that Newport used to have a hospital. Now Newporters made up ½ of their (NLH) business. In addition, New London Hospital had pledged eight million (\$8,000,000) plus dollars for a new Health Center for Newport (to be located on the John Stark Highway). Dr. Powell stated that Newport was a big part of New London Hospital. It was approximately ½ of its service (clientele) in a large geographical area.

Chairman Nichols thanked Dr. Powell for clarifying the Newport/New London relationship.

Chairman Nichols addressed Captain Carleton and asked what the increased percentage of transports from Newport to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) was. He was told 200%.

Dr. Powell told the Chairman and Board that he and NLAS staff had a very good rapport with Captain Carleton. Before transport with a Newport ambulance there had been times when Captain Carleton called and as a team they had decided the appropriate hospital (NL or DHMC) for transport. All those were good things to have between services.

Selectman Hoyt and then Selectman Kessler repeated that the reliance the small area towns had made on Newport (EMS) had become a problem. The First Aid Stabilization Team (FAST squads) were gone in the small towns.

Dr. Powell did not disagree with Selectman Kessler. He gave insights as to why the FAST squads were no longer active.

Chairman Nichols stated that Newport did have paying contracts with the Towns of Croydon, Goshen and the western side of Sunapee. He gave the number of citizens covered by Newport EMS (including those towns).

Selectman Fratzel addressed all those in attendance and stated that the BOS had sent out a letter in February of 2015 to the area towns (Board of Selectmen). They had not heard from anyone.

Dr. Powell addressed the Newport Board of Selectmen and stated there was not a magical answer to the problem. He stated that the letter the Board had sent out conflicted with some (area) town's fiscal year. Their (the small towns) money had already been allocated. He emphasized that the towns and ambulance divisions needed one year to collect data (and find accurate information) to make informed decisions on how to proceed in order to best serve all communities. He explained further why his plan would be in the best interests of all communities and citizens.

Chief Thomas (Newbury) told the Board members that his BOS had given him the letter to address because it was in his purview.

Ms. Drewniack addressed the Board on the culture change. The culture was moving away from volunteerism all over New England. There wasn't money in EMS. She explained the financial difficulties of EMTs. Men and women were receiving their EMT licenses and joining a fire department. She said it would be great to see small towns create FAST squads. It was not happening. She felt there needed to be a better business plan created for EMS coverage.

Chief Thomas stated, for clarification for the Board, that they (the towns involved) had had a few meetings. They had discussed options. They had decided to collect numbers and meet as was being done

July 27, 2015. They wanted to be able to state (to the Newport BOS) that they had corrected things (he explained their scenarios). He reiterated the situations that the Selectmen had stated they needed such as more EMTs- the towns had said if they needed an ambulance and Newport was not able to supply a full staff for a call, the towns would supply the needed manpower. Chief Thomas reiterated that they had been concerned and had come up with options (to assist Newport/NLAS). Communities have talked about having an ambulance in the town that would be available for EMTs use on a call.

Selectman Fratzel repeated that no one had contacted the Newport BOS.

Chief Thomas replied that the towns were waiting to get figures and firm options before they approached the Newport Board of Selectmen. They accepted what the Board had said; they had stated that they were going to help resolve the problem. The group of towns wanted to go to the Newport BOS and state they wanted a good working relationship with Fire and EMS, mutually assisting all seven or eight communities. Continuing, he stated they were willing to work with the Newport BOS and provide assistance that would make everyone happy. Chief Thomas emphasized that the information that he had provided was from all the towns; they were all concerned and had been part of the discussion.

Selectman Fratzel repeated that no one from Newbury's BOS has contacted the Newport BOS. Chief Thomas told Selectman Fratzel it was his department and his responsibility. He apologized to Selectman Fratzel but stated that it was his department and that the responsibility had been delegated to him (as it had been in other small towns).

Chairman Nichols asked Captain Carleton the cost of an ambulance service. The figure of approximately \$700,000 was given.

Chief Wayne Conroy (Newport) addressed the Board of Selectmen and stated that now that Newport's billing was done in-house the department had a better control on it (collections). He had been speaking to EMS services from other areas. Every one of them was going through staffing problems. One he distinctly remembered was an EMS in Boston, MA. They had lost forty two (42) paramedics to another service due to monetary reasons (increase in pay).

Ms. Hallquist (New London Town Administrator) stated that New London (town) had had a May town meeting. They had been able to address the (EMS) issue. She stated New London was very supportive. Dr. Powell and Mr. Riley had addressed the voters. The Town looked to New London Hospital EMS for guidance (on the subject). Ms. Hallquist hoped the Newport BOS did not think New London didn't care about the topic and their (Newport) decision. She stated that New London appreciated the Newport ambulance and NLAS. She told the Newport Board of Selectmen that the Town of New London had spent over \$200,000 on EMS care. She broached the subject of a First Aid Stabilization Team (FAST squad) in New London and stated if necessary they could look into that. Ms. Hallquist stated that New London had two fulltime firefighters who were EMTs, they could provide that (FAST squad) if necessary. She emphasized that the Town of New London wanted the best care possible for its citizens as well. Addressing the Chair, she stated they understood Newport's position.

Chairman Nichols stated that every time the discussion of EMS coverage was made, money was a factor. He stated it wasn't just money; and reiterated concerns of having a Newport ambulance covering distances as far as Springfield, good patient care and an understanding of the overall issue (see minutes of the February 24, 2015 meeting for more details).

Addressing Ms. Drewniack, Chairman Nichols stated that maybe a regional approach of having ambulances situated in small towns (that were not able to get crews) would be effective. He repeated concerns of not having EMTs to provide effective care.

Chairman Nichols stated for those present and those listening, that Newport EMS would continue with mutual aid coverage for mass casualty incidents) MCIs. That would not change.

Chairman Nichols told the representatives that the Board of Selectmen had not considered that some town meetings were in March and thus the (EMS) problem would not be addressed with their voters (Newport's town meeting was in May).

Ms. Drewniack addressed the Newport Board of Selectmen and stated they all might need to look at a regional approach to the problem. There was a short discussion.

Dr. Powell stated that they had discussed various action plans to a regional approach. He gave examples as to how it could be accomplished.

Chairman Nichols said representatives repeatedly stated meetings had to be held. He stated the meetings needed to be held on the administrative levels.

Chairman Nichols asked for any other comments. Town Manager O'Keefe was welcomed to Newport.

Chairman Nichols thanked all the representatives for attending the meeting. He told them that the (Newport) Board would go into non-public session. The Towns would receive a letter from Town Manager O'Keefe with their decision.

There being no further business in the public meeting, on a motion by Selectman Hoyt, seconded by Selectman Wilmot; ***the Board voted by roll call vote to enter into non-public session RSA 91-A:3 II(c) Matters which may affect the reputation of another, and RSA 91-A:3 II (d) Real Estate.*** The public meeting ended at 8:11 pm.

Chairman Nichols announced a five minute break before the non-public sessions.


On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Kessler, ***the Board voted to exit the non-public session (NPS) at 8:33 pm. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Ambulance Services

On a motion by Selectman Wilmot, seconded by Selectman Kessler, ***the Board voted to direct Town Manager O'Keefe to write a letter to New London Hospital, with copies to affected towns and staff, indicating that the Town will only continue to provide backup ambulance service to the east side of the town of Sunapee until December 31, 2015, but not thereafter, and further to instruct the Town Manager to negotiate an agreement with New London Hospital for paramedic intercept services on a per-call basis for the existing coverage area. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

On a motion by Selectman Hoyt, seconded by Selectman Wilmot, ***the Board voted to adjourn at 8:36 pm. The motion passed 5-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,



Maura Stetson
Scribe