

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 26th, 2020 Old Town Hall

Present: Chair Ted Connors, Selectman Mike Marconi, Selectman Ken Latchaw, Town Clerk Laura Coleman, Moderator Jack O'Reilly, Library Director Lara Berry, Fire Engineer, Ann Hyland Hebert, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder

T. Connors called the meeting to order at 4:04pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes:

M. Marconi moved to approve the minutes of October 19th, 2020 and the minutes of October 21st, 2020. K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.

Manifest Approval: K. Latchaw moved to approve the manifests for \$26,598.45 dated 10/22/2020. M. Marconi seconded the motion with all in favor.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Budget:

Town Clerk/Tax Collector L. Coleman presented the Elections and Town Clerk/Tax Collector budgets to the Selectmen. L. Coleman gave the Selectmen a spreadsheet of towns and Town Clerk's pay. The Town Clerk's office is open to the public for 12 ½ hours a week, but L. Coleman puts in 40 hours a week. Based on the information on the chart, L. Coleman is asking for a \$5,000 increase in salary plus another person, 15 hours a week, in the office. It takes over a year to train someone to work in the town clerk's office. If L. Coleman decides to retire, she wants to leave with two people trained. The software line has increased in 2021 because more software is needed for the state computer.

Elections Budget:

The Elections budget has decreased for 2021 because there is only one election compared to four elections in 2020. They purchased a new election machine in 2020.

Healthtrust Return of Contributions:

Healthtrust is returning 18 million dollars to NH towns. \$30,000 for Newington. M. Roy recommends that the town take this revenue in this fiscal year. The Board of Selectmen will vote on this on Monday November 2, 2020.

2021 Tax Rate:

The Board discussed the different tax rate options. The goal is to keep \$2,300,000 in the undesignated fund balance. K. Latchaw thought that is important to keep a good fund balance amount in anticipation of 2021 being a difficult year. The Assessor recommends that the town set aside \$300,000 for abatements in 2021.

M. Marconi moved to set the 2021 tax rate at \$9.89. K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.

2021 Goals:

The Board discussed the first draft of the 2021 goals. K. Latchaw would like to add the 2021 road work to the draft. What roads are pending, which roads need to be crack sealed. It was a consensus of the Board to accept the first draft of the 2021 goals.

FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps and Flood Insurance Study:

November 3rd Election:

J. O'Reilly and L. Coleman updated the Board on the upcoming election. They are going to set up the auditorium the same way they did in September. Masks are required in the Town Hall. If a resident refuses to wear a mask then they can fill out an absentee ballot or fill out a regular ballot on the picnic table out front. The cleaners, Mops and Buckets, will be at the Town Hall sanitizing everything all day. They are going to run the test ballots on Wednesday at 10am. Police will be here all day. Polls are open 8am-7pm. 150 absentee ballots have been turned in so far. There is a separate checklist for absentee ballots. The Town Clerk's office is going to be open on Monday November 2nd from 3pm-5pm for people that need to turn in absentee ballots or get absentee ballots. They are going to set up the room on Monday. T. Connors thanked J. O'Reilly and L. Coleman for coming in and for all their hard work.

Library Parking Lot:

M. Marconi moved to encumber \$80,000 for the Library parking lot. K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor on a roll call vote; M. Marconi-yes, K. Latchaw-yes and T. Connors-yes.

M. Roy sent out a Budget Freeze Questionnaire to the department heads asking them what the approximate total is that they would spend if the freeze is lifted.

Tax bills are going to be sent out on November 5th. The Town is all set if a Tax anticipation note loan is needed. Currently it does not look as if one will be required.

T. Connors recessed the meeting at 4:53pm to return at 5:15pm.

Historic District Commission Budget:

L. Pickering presented the Historic District Commission budget for 2021. The budget is the same as 2020. L. Pickering expressed her frustration with the Board of Selectmen because she has asked \$10,000 in 2020 for tree cutting and planting in the historic district. L. Pickering would like to encumber those funds and do the work in 2021. K. Latchaw thought the Board should closely monitor the 2021 Budget before spending money on tree cutting and planting. T. Connors said that the Board backs the idea of tree cutting and planting but will have to wait and see what the economy is doing in 2021 before making any decisions. L. Pickering said that L. Thomas had done a good job taking out some stumps by the Old Parsonage and Stone School. There are more to be taken out. M. Roy said she would send an email to L. Pickering outlining the process to get the plantings and cutting done. The fence around the arboretum garden is complete. It took 90 hours of free labor to get it done. The warrant article about the \$20,000 Eversource money said that the money would be used for historic restoration. L. Pickering would like to use the money to build some stone walls. L. Pickering would like the Board to put in 3 mini-splits in the Old Parsonage and some more electrical outlets. L. Pickering would like to encumber the \$2,000 that was budget for the outlets in the Old Parsonage and the \$20,000 from Eversource.

Library Budget:

L. Berry told the Board how the Newington library compares to other libraries in towns with 700-900 residents. Newington is 2nd in visits and checkouts. J. O'Reilly and L. Berry presented the Library budget for 2021. The 2021 budget is level funded from 2020. The Library Trustees have decided not to give the employees merit raises. Instead bonuses will be given at the end of the year. T. Connors asked if the Library was planning on opening soon. L. Berry said that they will be by appointment for the time being. It is the safest way and the most efficient. They are thinking of upgrading their ventilation system. K. Latchaw suggested they contact the school because they just upgraded their ventilation system. J. O'Reilly said that the urn out in front of the library needs to be repaired. \$2,000 is included in the 2021 budget for the repair.

Fire Assessment Report:

The report has been completed by Municipal Resources, Inc and distributed to the Fire Chief, Engineers and the Board of Selectmen.

Sprague Odors:

M. Roy and P. Deschaine met with Tim Winters and Lance Durgan from Sprague. T. Winters told M. Roy that Sprague couldn't pinpoint any fumes coming from them. The NHDES is involved now and have put other ideas to mitigate potential odors on hold. NHDES is now copied on every complaint. In

1990 Patterson Lane residents came to the Planning Board to complain about the Sprague Fumes. The complaints of odors from Patterson Lane residents has stopped.

Recreation Budget:

The Recreation 2021 budget is the same as the 2020 budget.

Adjournment: M. Marconi moved to adjourn at 6:07pm. K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy
Recorder