

Town of Newington, NH  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes  
Monday, December 9th, 2019 Town Hall

**Present:** Chair Ted Connors, Selectman Ken Latchaw, Selectman Mike Marconi, Sewer Commissioners; Skip Cole, Rick Stern and Tom Hazelton, Sewer Plant Manager, Denis Messier, Residents, Doreen Stern and Gail Klanchesser, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder

T. Connors called the meeting to order at 5:00pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board held a non-meeting with the town attorney from 5-5:52pm.

**Fire Department Budget:**

The Board of Selectmen discussed two reductions in the Fire Department budget. The first reduction is to the Professional Training line. The Fire Department asked for \$19,000 in this budget line. \$13,000 would be used for paramedic training for a firefighter. The Board of Selectmen thought that instead of training a current firefighter and waiting 2 years for completion of the program, the department could hire a paramedic in 2020. The Fire Department previously had two paramedics. They only have one paramedic currently. They have one opening. This could be filled with a person that is currently a paramedic.

The second reduction is in the legal line. The department asked for \$6,000, the Board of Selectmen reduced it to \$0. The Selectmen have moved all legal expense lines into one central legal expense line. The Selectmen completed this change last year and the Budget Committee was in agreement.

The Selectmen are concerned that they haven't received the excel spreadsheet of Firefighter protective clothing/bunker gear. This list has been continually asked for, for over a month. The department is asking for \$30,000 in this line and they have spent over \$51,000 in the last three years.

**M. Marconi moved to decrease the two Fire Department budget lines; Professional Training by \$13,000 and Legal by \$6,000. They will leave the bunker gear/protective clothing budget line at the requested amount for the time being but it is contingent on receiving the spreadsheet of all the bunker gear purchased since 2017. K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.**

**Police Department Budget:**

M. Roy explained that the Police Commission had reviewed a salary survey that the Seacoast Police Chiefs Association had produced. They noticed that the Newington patrolmen were paid less than the average in the seacoast. They are asking that the Board of Selectmen to approve an increase for the Patrolmen to bring them up to a competitive rate. This would add approximately \$20,000 to the Police Department's 2020 budget. **M. Marconi moved to increase the Patrolmen's salaries in accordance with the wage survey for 2020.** K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.

**Sewer Commissioners:**

M. Roy explained that many businesses in town have contacted the Town Hall to inquire about the increased sewer rates, that is why the Board of Selectmen asked the Sewer Commissioners to meet with them. T. Connors added that many businesses were caught short this year because they didn't know about the increase and hadn't budgeted enough money.

D. Messier advised that businesses had contacted him as well. D. Messier will soon begin to work on the Sewer rates for the next year. This is the second year of the increased rates. He is working to minimize expenses.

T. Connors explained that the Economic Development Committee is working to retain businesses that are currently located in Town and to attract new businesses to Newington. Our sewer rates are high, but our taxes are low. R. Stern advised that Newington has always had higher sewer rates than surrounding communities. M. Marconi thought that the new hotel coming to town will help decrease the rates. M. Marconi asked if there are different sewer rates for the different flow users. D. Messier explained that the rates are the same no matter the flow.

K. Latchaw inquired if the Sewer Bond could be refinanced. D. Messier explained that the Sewer Department has a State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan with a one-million-dollar debt reduction over the 20 years with an interest rate of 2.67%. D. Messier thought if we refinanced that we would lose the debt reduction. The department is always looking for grants to reduce costs.

K. Latchaw asked about the Forcemain project and if it meant that the department would be getting another bond. R. Stern advised that the first part of the Forcemain project was funded completely from the Sewer Enterprise Fund at a cost of \$267,000. This second bond will be much lower, which means that the payment will be much lower.

D. Messier explained that if flows are up then the rates will go down. R. Stern added that there is a surcharge added to sewer bills each year. This surcharge was lowered this year to help offset the increased rates.

D. Messier reminded the Board that this entire upgrade project was to meet the EPA requirements for nitrogen. Newington was one of the first plants to complete the upgrade, so our rates have increased. Many surrounding towns are now doing the upgrade at their sewer plants so their sewer rates will be increasing over the next couple of years.

K. Latchaw stressed how important it was for Newington to maintain its tax advantage. D. Messier added that he works hard to maintain the rates for the sewer users.

The Board thanked the Sewer Commissioners for coming to the meeting.

Doreen Stern asked why it had taken so long to stop Eastern Bearings from cutting down trees and digging in wetlands. They had no protection from the stream.

M. Roy explained that Rick Stern had texted her on 11/26 and told her about it. She went down to the site that day and videotaped the activity, she emailed the video to the Building Inspector. Kevin Kelley, the Building Inspector, went to the site on 11/27 and issued a "stop work" order.

D. Stern wanted to know why Rick Stern had to fill out a complaint form about the issue. D. Stern thought that it was now making them the "bad guys" instead of the building inspector.

R. Stern also wanted to let the Selectmen know that there are trucks full of nitrogen and covered with nitrogen that they wash off and then the run off goes into the stream. The DES should look at this situation.

T. Connors apologized for the process and thanked Doreen and Rick Stern for coming to the meeting and letting the Selectmen know the issue they were having.

**Adjournment:** M. Marconi moved to adjourn at 6:39pm. K. Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eleanor Boy  
Recorder