

Town of Newington, NH
Budget Committee Public Hearing Minutes
Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Chair John Lamson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

Present: John Lamson, Chair, Emily Savinelli, Vice-Chair, Chris Wayss, Alan Wilson, Jamie Belanger, Rick Stern, Jeff Semprini, Jennifer Kent Weiner, Maggie Cooke, Selectmen's Rep, Brandon Arsenault and School Board Rep, Jeremy Boston.

Guests: Town Clerk Doreen Caradonna, Deputy Town Clerk Susan Newcomer, Road Agent Len Thomas, Town Engineer Eric Weinrieb, Board of Fire Engineer Chair John Klanchesser, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Sewer Plant Manager Ariel Wright, Library Trustee Chair Jack O'Reilly, Cemetery Trustee Peggy Lamson, Denis Hebert-Planning Board Chair, Mike Bilodeau-Police Chief, EJ Hoyt-Fire Chief, Patrick Moynihan-Assistant Fire Chief, Bill Wright-Police Commissioner, Jackie Hoyt-Police Commissioner, Taylor Fiore-Police Admin Assistant, Lara Berry-Library Director, COAST Bus Executive Director Rad Nichols, Newington School Principal Peter Latchaw, SAU50 Superintendent Stephen Zadravec, SAU50 Business Manager Susan Penny, Sheryl Bagley-Finance Director, Martha Roy-Town Administrator and Sylvia Bly-Admin Asst. Other residents and employees were present.

School Budget Review:

SAU 50 Superintendent S. Zadravec said that the school budget had increased by \$176,417. The increase was due to five more students attending Portsmouth High School and increased Special Education costs. The tuition for the high school is \$21,102 per student and the tuition for the middle school is \$22,608 per student. Newington has 20 students in the high school and 6 students in the middle school. Resident Gail Klanchesser asked why some of the budget lines were budgeted \$0. S. Penny explained that she had recategorized expenses to better align with the state expense lines. A. Hyland Hebert asked what the expense was per student at the Newington School. S. Penny said \$31,175. D. Hebert asked about the 5% that the school can retain of excess funds each year. B. Arsenault explained that reducing the percentage retained was not a budget committee decision, it was a school board decision. The Budget Committee has asked the School Board to consider reducing the percentage.

Article 1: Proposed School Operating Budget. J. Belanger moved to recommend Article 1 in the amount of \$2,608,482. C. Wayss seconded the motion. All were in favor 11-0.

E. Savinelli asked what progress has been made about the Newington portion given to the SAU 50 budget. M. Roy said that the Board had contacted legal counsel to appeal the legislation about the formula used to figure out how much each town has to

contribute to the SAU 50 administration budget. J. Lamson explained that Newington's amount is based on our valuation.

J. Lamson explained that the Budget Committee needed to vote on the Regional Association budget corrected amount of \$36,962.

R. Stern moved to approved to new Regional Association budget amount of \$36,962. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of Eight Million, Four Hundred Fifty-Five Thousand, Two Hundred and Seventeen Dollars (\$8,455,217) for the operating budget. This article does not include appropriations voted in special or individual warrant articles addressed separately.

B. Arsenault said that the Board of Selectmen had increased the highway vehicle maintenance line and the Recreation Committee's budget, but had worked hard to keep the tax rate the same. The Budget Committee increased the Highway fuel line by \$1,500 and the Library's budget. Library Director L. Berry said that she would like to reduce the library's telephone expense line by \$1,000. Resident Wil Gilbert would like the Budget Committee to consider an increase in the Old Parsonage electricity expense line to \$1,776, which is an \$888 increase. B. Arsenault explained that the Board of Selectmen reduced the electricity line because they didn't think that heating an uninsulated building was a good idea. It was like throwing money out the window. B. Arsenault explained that committees could meet in the Old Parsonage but the Board asked that they turn up the heat a couple of hours before the meeting, not run it all the time. D. Hebert asked the Budget Committee to consider restoring the COAST budget line to the amount that they had originally requested, \$38,907, which is a \$11,176 increase. D. Hebert thought that Newington should support local businesses that rely on their workers using the COAST bus system. 18 employees from the Crossings use the bus to get to work on a regular basis. Newington should pay their fair share based on the number of people it serves. D. Hebert said that COAST will be asking Newington for \$2,000 less (\$36,907) in 2024. E. Savinelli asked about the library's over expenditure on health insurance. L. Berry explained that they had an employee change during the year, which changed the health insurance expense amount.

J. Belanger moved to amend the Town budget by increasing it by \$11,352. R. Stern seconded the motion.

M. Roy said that the increased amount should be \$11,064.

J. Belanger moved to amend his motion to be an increase in the Town budget of \$11,064 not \$11,352. R. Stern seconded the motion.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the amendment. B. Arsenault, J. Kent Weiner and J. Boston were opposed. All others in favor 8-3.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the new amended Town budget amount of \$8,466,281. B. Arsenault and J. Boston opposed. All others in favor. (9-2)

J. Kent Weiner asked if next year the COAST Director could come to the Budget Committee meeting when the Regional Associations budget was on the agenda. J. Kent Weiner thinks that the committee needs to receive financial information ahead of time and needs a crisper analysis.

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$150,000) to be placed in the Replacement of Vehicles Operated by the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund.

E. Savinelli moved to recommend Article 4. C. Wayss seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000) to be placed in the Replacement of the Town Ambulance and any Major Medical Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Kent Weiner moved to recommend Article 5. J. Boston seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) to be added to the Replacement of Vehicles Operated by the Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund.

R. Stern moved to recommend Article 6. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) to be placed in the Library Building Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Boston moved to recommend Article 7. M. Cooke seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand (\$10,000) to be placed in the Police Computer Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

R. Stern moved to recommend Article 8. J. Boston seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand (\$10,000) to be added to the Historical Preservation Capital Reserve Fund.

A. Wilson moved to recommend Article 9. J. Belanger seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand (\$5,000) to be placed in the Replacement of Major Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

M. Cooke moved to recommend Article 10. J. Belanger seconded the motion. J. Belanger for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand (\$5,000) to be placed in the Body Worn Cameras and Cruiser Mounted Audio and Video Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

M. Cooke moved to recommend Article 11. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Kent Weiner for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in the Police Department Radio/Electronics Capital Reserve Fund.

E. Savinelli moved to recommend Article 12. R. Stern seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Five Hundred Sixty-Two Dollars (\$4,562) to be placed in the Major Repairs of Vehicles Operated by the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Belanger moved to recommend Article 13. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Article 14: To see if the Town will establish a capital reserve fund known as the Municipally Owned Bridges Maintenance, Construction or Reconstruction Fund And further to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Three Thousand, Six Hundred and Ninety-One Dollars (\$23,691) to be placed in said fund with the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend.

R. Stern moved to recommend Article 14. J. Belanger seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 11-0.

Minutes Approval:

M. Cooke moved to approve the 1-25-23 minutes as amended. R. Stern seconded the motion. All were in favor.

J. Boston moved to adjourn at 7:35pm. R. Stern seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy Recorder