

Town of Newington, NH
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 7, 2022 Town Hall

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

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

Guests: Selectman, Ted Connors, Cemetery Trustees; Margaret Lamson and Cosmos Iocovozzi, Economic Development Committee Chair Judy Miamis, EDC Member, Brian Semprini, Recreation Committee Members; Jessica Morgan, Bill Wright and Jack O'Reilly, Board of Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Sheryl Bagley, Finance Director and Martha Roy, Town Administrator.

Minutes: A. Wilson asked that a percentage of 8.3% be added when talking about the monthly amount for budget expenditures. J. Boston moved to approve the amended minutes of October 5, 2022. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Cemetery Budget:

A. Wilson presented the Cemetery budget to the committee. M. Lamson explained that the Cemetery Trustees have tried to hire a sexton but have had no luck. Any work done in the cemetery has to be contracted out. A. Wilson said soon they would like to redo the road in the cemetery by the horse sheds. He believes it will cost about \$20,000. This money will be taken out of the capital reserve account. There will be a warrant article at the 2023 town meeting about increasing the cost of a cemetery plot from \$300 to \$600. Money received for cemetery plots is deposited into the capital reserve account and interest from that account is used for perpetual care in the cemetery. The trustees bought 122 new flags to mark the veteran's graves.

E. Savinelli moved to approve the 2023 Cemetery budget of \$20,103. J. Belanger seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Economic Development Committee Budget:

Chair J. Miamis presented the budget to the committee. The main goal of the EDC is to bring businesses into town and maintain the ones that are already here. The committee holds an event each year to get all the business owners together to find out what problems they are having and how Newington can help them. J. Miamis said that the biggest increase in their 2023 budget is for a business event. B. Arsenault explained that the Board of Selectmen have recommended restoring the \$5,000 that was cut at the 2022

town meeting. He recommended that the Committee look at the 2021 budget to compare it to the 2023 requested total. The EDC did some new marketing in 2022, they advertised in the Patriots yearbook that is distributed to the skyboxes and business seating at every Patriots game. J. Kent Weiner asked what the committee's measurable goals were for the events and the value of the event. J. Miamis said that the committee did a survey at the event about what brought the businesses to Newington and how to retain the businesses that are already in Newington and what the challenges were for these businesses in Newington. The survey helped the committee really narrow in on what they should be focusing on. B. Arsenault explained that the first event the EDC did focus on brokers that would be able to bring businesses to Newington. The second event focused on businesses that were already in town, the problems they have, what they liked about Newington and how to retain them. The EDC doesn't know the target of the 2023 event yet. J. Belanger asked about the nine members of the EDC. What business sectors are they pulled from and what industries is the EDC targeting to bring into Newington. J. Miamis said that she is a graphic designer, B. Semprini had worked for the Governor's office and Kara Anderson works with nonprofits restoring historical buildings. Biotech companies and small manufacturing are good businesses for Newington. J. Semprini asked if the EDC had reached out to Torrington to invite them for a joint meeting. J. Miamis said not yet. Torrington is the company that bought Newington Park, the Sears building at the mall and the interior of the mall. C. Wayss asked how many people attend the EDC events. J. Miamis said the last one had about 80 people, which represented about 50 companies. J. Miamis said that they targeted people who make decisions for the businesses.

C. Wayss moved to approve the 2023 Economic Development Committee budget for \$13,110. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Recreation Committee Budget:

J. Kent Weiner moved to tentatively approve the Recreation Committee budget of \$147,780. C. Wayss seconded the motion.

J. Morgan presented the budget to the committee. J. Morgan explained that the 2023 budget has increased due to an increase in the activities and the summer camp budget lines. Historically, the YMCA has held summer camp in Newington for between \$700 and \$1000 per child. The YMCA didn't think Camp Newington was going to be able to be run at that price so the new contract with the YMCA has a cost of \$1,791 per camper. This is for 9 weeks, five days a week, from 8am to 5pm. The budget number of \$89,550 is based on having 50 campers. However, the actual cost to the taxpayers of Newington is only \$20,000 because the parents pay a large portion of the bill. The \$20,000 cost to the town is approximately what the taxpayers have paid each year for Camp Newington. J. Kent Weiner asked why they picked the number 50 for the number of campers. J. Morgan explained that an extra grade is added in for camp. J. Lamson mentioned that

there is a huge demand for summer camps. J. Belanger questioned if it's appropriate to put \$89,550 in the summer camp budget line if the actual cost is only \$20,000.

B. Arsenault explained that this is just the process of budgeting the town has to put 100% of the cost in the budget line even though the net cost to the taxpayers is only \$20,000. B. Arsenault said that the Recreation Committee has done a great job to get summer camp back in Newington for the same tax burden to the taxpayers. J. Belanger said that having a summer camp in town makes a big difference for working families.

C. Wayss asked if J. Morgan had faith that the YMCA would not pull out this year as they have done in the past. J. Morgan said that there are new people at the YMCA that are very excited about Camp Newington. She met with them and gave them a tour of the facilities, which they liked a lot, and she is currently working on the contract with the YMCA and expects that it will be signed in the next couple of weeks. J. Morgan believes the reason they pulled out in previous years is because the town didn't talk to them early enough and they didn't lock them into a contract. C. Wayss asked if there was anything in place if the YMCA does pull out. J. Morgan said no, they are not going to do a last-minute camp. J. Lamson mentioned that the recreation director is doing a great job broadening the activities offered to the residents. B. Wright passed around a summary of activities that have been done this year. The committee estimates the recreation director will work 12 hours a week in 2023. She has done a great job doing outreach to the residents and engaging seniors. Having a director is very important for continuity. The recreation director will also drop into the camp to make sure everything is going OK. The budget line for the director has increased in 2023 because she started in August of 2022 so that only reflects five months. Discussion ensued about the condition of the courts and the ball fields, the cost of fixing them, budget lines divided into revenue generating lines and non-revenue generating lines, porta potties at Septemberfest, the new fence at the basketball court in south Newington, a fence along the first base line at the ball field, the new slides at the Old Town Hall in 2023 and the storing of the pickle ball nets, the fire pits at the Old Town Hall and the maintenance of the backboards. B. Arsenault said that at the 2022 town meeting, the residents said they would like more community events for all ages. C. Wayss asked about the intent of the capital reserve fund. W. Wright said that it is used for improvements to the ball field, soccer field, the tennis courts, and the basketball courts. W. Wright thinks that \$7,500 a year for the capital reserve account will keep them on track.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Recreation budget. All were in favor.

New Budget Committee Member:

M. Roy said that the committee had received a letter from Margaret Cooke expressing interest in the open position on the Budget Committee. J. Lamson said that this appointment would be until the Town Meeting. The person who gets appointed could then run for election. **J. Kent Weiner moved to appoint Margaret Cooke to the Budget Committee. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Adjournment: J. Kent Weiner moved to adjourn at 7:43pm. B. Arsenault seconded the motion with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy, Recording Secretary