

Town of Newington, NH  
Budget Committee Public Hearing Minutes  
Wednesday, February 6, 2019 Town Hall

Chair John Lamson called the meeting to order at 6:30pm

John Lamson opened the meeting by asking for a moment of silence for Jim Katkin, the longtime SAU business manager who recently passed away.

**Present:** John Lamson, Chair, Brandon Arsenault, Vice-Chair, William Wright, Alan Wilson, Jamie Belanger, Jennifer Kent Weiner, School Board Rep, Jack O'Reilly, Selectmen's Rep, Mike Marconi

**Absent:** Sandra Sweeney and Katherine Latchaw

**Guests:** Ted Connors-Board of Selectmen Chair, Ken Latchaw-Selectman, Salvatore Petralia, SAU 50 Superintendent of Schools, Amy Ransom-SAU 50 Business Administrator, Cindy Saklad-Finance Director, Denis Hebert-Planning Board Chair, Mike Bilodeau-Police Chief, Darin Sabine-Fire Chief, EJ Hoyt-Assistant Fire Chief, Peter Latchaw-Newington School Principal, Chris Russo-School Board Member, Lara Croft-Library Director, Lillian Wilson-Library Trustee, Steve Prefontaine-Police Commissioner, Brenda Blonigan-Police Commissioner, John Klanchesser-Fire Engineer, Denis Messier - Sewer Plant Manager, Skip Cole- Sewer Commissioner, Jim Weiner-Conservation Commission Co-Chair, Martha Roy-Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder. Other residents and employees were present.

**School Budget Review:**

Amy Ransom reviewed the School Operating Budget for the Newington School District. The budget has decreased overall. Some lines that have increased are: teachers' salaries, a new air conditioning unit and speech therapy contracts.

**Article 1: Proposed Operating Budget.** J. Kent Weiner moved to recommend Article 1 in the amount of \$2,191,162. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

**Article 2: Appropriate Funds to the Special Education Trust Fund:** J. O'Reilly moved to recommend Article 2 in the amount of \$20,000. A. Wilson seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

**Article 3: Appropriate Funds to the Buildings and Grounds Expendable Trust Fund:** M. Marconi moved to recommend Article 3 in the amount of \$20,000. J. O'Reilly seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

**Article 4: Appropriate Funds to the Tuition Expendable Trust Fund:** J. Belanger moved to recommend Article 4 in the amount of \$20,000. J. O'Reilly seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

J. Lamson recessed the meeting and then called the meeting back to order and proceeded to hold the Town Budget Public Hearing.

## Town Budget Public Hearing

**Article 1: Sewer Forcemain Pipe Replacement for \$1,000,000:** Denis Messier, Sewer Plant Manager, explained that the Sewer Commissioners have decided to replace the Paul Brook Pump Station Forcemain pipe. It is 40 years old and has broken twice in four years and waste has gotten into Paul Brook. They have received preapproval for \$1,000,000 at 2.70% for 20 years. This bond must be approved at the Town Meeting and then will go through the Wetlands Bureau. This will have no impact on the tax rate because it will be paid for with sewer fees. John Lamson spoke about how the Sewer Plant upgrade was well done and ahead of the curve. John Lamson also recognized Jack Hoyt and his service to the Town at the Sewer Plant for 40 years. **M. Marconi moved to recommend Article 1 in the amount of \$1,000,000. J. Belanger seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.**

**Article 2: Development of a Waste Water Asset Management Plan for \$30,000:** M. Marconi moved to recommend Article 2 in the amount of \$30,000. J. Belanger seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

J. Lamson asked for questions or comments on the town budget.

Emily Savinelli asked why the professional training line in the budget is only \$100. J. Lamson explained that the committee puts \$100 in a line in case the department decides to attend training. E. Savinelli also thought that the webpage budget was too low and the website needed more work. Discussion ensued on the Executive Office's computer budget; should all the departments be combined and get a better price on computer support, M. Roy explained that the consultant had recommended to the Town that computers should be replaced every three years. Ann Hyland Hebert spoke in support of upgrading the town's computer system. She thought that the Town should spend more now to get the value now. Time spent talking about technology is time wasted. More power and more capacity is needed now.

M. Prefontaine questioned why the Meeting House budget, the Fire Station budget and the Highway budget had increased. M. Roy explained that the balcony in the Meeting House was showing signs of stress and needed to be studied, the Fire Station has a septic line underneath it that needs to be replaced and a study needs to be done to see if a fire fighting gear ventilation room could be added to the station and the Highway budget has increased because the \$75,000 encumbrance for Wilcox Way was added back to the Highway budget and \$40,000 for plowing of Woodbury Ave. Melissa Prefontaine asked about the increase in the Care of Trees expense line. M. Roy explained that this line combined several care of trees lines in other areas of the budget into one place.

E. Savinelli expressed concern about the revaluation happening in 2019. She asked if it could be delayed until after the Eversource project is done. J. Lamson explained that revaluation is a state law and can't be delayed. E. Savinelli thought the amount of \$50,000 for the Eversource fight in the legal budget wasn't enough. Denis Hebert stated that he believed this was enough for a fight all the way to the Supreme Court.

E. Savinelli thought the cut to the Recreation budget was not a good idea and viewed the cut as a punishment. J. Lamson explained that the Selectmen asked everyone to rethink their budgets. The cut is not a punishment, just good budgeting. If the Recreation Committee has some new ideas for programs the Selectmen will fund them.

J. Lamson thanked all the Town Officials, employees and committee members for all their hard work on behalf of the Town. B. Arsenault questioned the Highway's resurfacing budget. He thinks it is

not clear what is happening and where the encumbrances from previous years are. M. Roy told the committee that she would provide the committee with a report showing all the projects and expenses over the past five years. The Selectmen had Rockingham Planning Commission complete a survey of all the town roads and gave the town a report on the condition of the roads and the plan for resurfacing and patching in the future. A. Hebert expressed concern that the Fire Department parking lot wasn't paved this year and the Selectmen used those funds for another project. M. Roy explained that the Fire Engineers and D. Sabine had asked that their parking lot not be paved in 2018. J. Lamson explained that the Fire Department doesn't own the money and the Board of Selectmen decide what needs to be done.

B. Arsenault asked why the Police Department is keeping an old cruiser this year. M. Bilodeau explained that they are going to use the old cruiser for details; this will hopefully extend the life of the new cruiser. The Police Department now has 8 cruisers. J. Lamson reminded the department that it is important to keep the costs the same for running 8 cruisers. 2019 is going to be a trial run for retaining an old cruiser. The department will reevaluate at the end of the year.

Discussion ensued about warrant articles and whether warrant articles that are for purchasing and repair of vehicles should be separated. The committee would like to know that when \$106,000 is added to the ambulance warrant article, the entire amount will be used for the purchase of a new ambulance.

Darin Sabine reviewed his fleet of vehicles. D. Hebert wanted to know why no money was being added to the Fire Department Vehicle Capital Reserve account. Darin Sabine explained that the department had to set their priorities. Their first priority currently is the ambulance and so that capital reserve fund is supported for increase. The Fire Department is getting a donation of a fire boat from Sprague and Sea-3. The Fire Department pulled 16 people out of the river in 2018.

#### **Warrant Articles:**

##### **Article 3: Operating Budget**

M. Marconi moved to recommend the warrant article to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of (\$7,893,453) for the operating budget. This article does not include appropriations voted in special or individual warrant articles addressed separately. J. Belanger seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

##### **Article 4: Replacement of the Town Ambulance and any Major Medical Equipment Capital Reserve Fund**

M. Marconi moved to recommend the Replacement of the Town Ambulance and any Major Medical Equipment fund warrant article, in the amount of \$106,000, to the town. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

##### **Article 5: Major Road Work Fund**

B. Arsenault moved to recommend the Major Road Work capital reserve fund warrant article, in the amount of \$100,000, to the town. A. Wilson seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. Four were in favor, A. Wilson, M. Marconi, W. Wright and J. Lamson. Four were opposed, B. Arsenault, J. Kent Weiner, J. Belanger and J. O'Reilly.

##### **Article 6: Conservation Fund**

B. Arsenault moved to recommend the Conservation fund warrant article, in the amount of \$70,000, to the town. J. O'Reilly seconded the motion.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

Article 7: Severance to Town Employees

O'Reilly moved to recommend the Severance to Town Employees Trust fund warrant article, in the amount of \$30,000, to the town. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

Article 8: Fire Department Communications Capital Reserve Fund

M. Marconi moved to recommend the Fire Department Communications Capital Reserve Fund warrant article, in the amount of \$10,000, to the town. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

Article 9: Town Generators Capital Reserve Fund

M. Marconi moved to recommend the Town Generators Capital Reserve Fund warrant article, in the amount of \$10,000, to the town. J. O'Reilly seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

Article 10: Police Department Radio/Electronics Capital Reserve Fund

M. Marconi moved to recommend the Police Department Radio/Electronics Capital Reserve Fund warrant article, in the amount of \$5,000, to the town. J. O'Reilly seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

Article 11: Town Recreation Facilities and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

B. Arsenault moved to recommend the Recreation Facilities and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund warrant article, in the amount of \$2,500, to the town. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

Article 12: Fire Department Lease Purchase Agreement warrant article in the amount of \$80,144.46 for the purpose of leasing and purchasing two defibrillators, one auto pulse system and rebuild the existing stretcher, with a 2019 payment of \$28,194. This lease agreement contains an escape clause.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend the Fire Department lease purchase agreement warrant article, in the amount of \$80,144.46, to the town. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

Article 13: Fire Department lease Purchase Agreement warrant article in the amount of \$185,195 for the purpose of purchasing twenty-four self-contained breathing apparatus, with a 2019 payment of \$20,000.

M. Marconi moved to recommend the Fire Department lease purchase agreement warrant article, in the amount of \$185,195, to the town. A. Wilson seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

J. O'Reilly moved to approve the minutes of January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019. M. Marconi seconded the motion with all in favor.

M. Marconi moved to adjourn at 9:35pm. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Boy  
Recorder