

**Budget Committee Minutes**  
**Public Hearing for School and Town Proposed 2011 Budgets**  
**Saturday, February 5, 2011 1:00pm Town Hall**

***Chairman John Lamson called the meeting to order at 1:03pm.***

**Present:** Chr. Lamson, VC Gail Klanchesser, Darin Sabine, Liz Taccetta, Gail Pare, Russ Cooke, School Board Rep Dave Mueller, Selectmen's Rep Jack O'Reilly and Administrative Assistant Beatrice Marconi.

**Members absent:** Larry Wahl Also present were: Jim Katkin, Deirdre Link, Principal Dennis Mayo, Superintendent George Cushing, and Christa Bellmare all representing the School. In addition, Selectmen Chairman Jan Stuart and Selectman Iocovozzi were in attendance along with 26 members of the public including various committee and board members as well as employees.

**Minute Approval:** *Gail Pare moved to accept the minutes of January 26, 2011. VC Gail Klanchesser seconded* with a correction on page 2 which showed 'fire warden truck' however the minutes should have stated Forestry truck. ***Motion to accept passed with amendment 7-0-1 (chr. Lamson abstaining)***

***VC G Klanchesser moved to accept the School Boards article 1 in the amount of \$1,880,244. G Pare seconded.***

***At 1:06 Chairman Lamson opened the public hearing on the school budget for public input and discussion***

- Patty Borkland – Concerned about social growth of the students with such a small pupil count at our elementary school (32). Would like to see a committee formed to discuss this issue and to examine cost related issues with other area institutions for comparison.
- Tom Hourihan – Agreed with Ms. Borkland. Would prefer if the student count was larger to challenge & inspire. His daughter was bored when she attended Newington Elementary and was sent to another school. He felt our school should be closed.
- Leila Richardson – Spoke in defense of the small pupil count and liked the idea that teachers could cater to the student's individual needs. Saw no signs of bullying and felt we were lucky and felt Newington should continue to put resources into the school. Regarding socialization, her children participate in local communities programs.
- George Cushing – Invited those interested to attend a school board meeting as that was really the proper venue. He went on to say that personalization works well with children and parents, as this establishes needs. He is impressed with what is happening at the Newington school with the bigger kids watching out for the smaller ones and good teacher connections with every child. Regarding the cost per pupil, because of the low student count, that is extremely high, but over the last 10 years, he stated they have only seen a 2% change in the budget. SAU and the school board take spending, costs and taxes very seriously. As far as tuitioning children in, they continue to explore that avenue. Online education funds are also being looked at. He felt there are several vibrant reasons to keep the school open. He invited everyone to come into school or to a school board meeting as they are very proud.
- Doreen Stern – She stated that her two children attended the elementary school and one made it to 5<sup>th</sup> grade as a non reader. Specialists were brought in and after a reading specialist got involved, his skills improved. He had the same teacher in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade and felt the school was way too small for any socialization benefit at all.
- Chr. Lamson reminded everyone that this was a budget public hearing and that perhaps the issues discussed today should be brought up with the school board.
- Justin Richardson felt that the money dedicated to the school is money well spent. He felt the Newington school is an investment. To be part of a larger community would take away the unique aspect of the town.
- Christa Bellmare – She stated that tuition elsewhere is not inexpensive. When you look at the per pupil cost using the division of the number of students, this number is distorted.
- Chr. Lamson – noted that the stimulus is the issue, more so than the money.

- Keith Frizzell – He supports the school with 4 of his children going there. He felt they got individual attention and it was a great experience. Regarding the cost per pupil, because of the student count it is extremely high, however if we got 50 or 60 students to go there the cost would substantially drop.
- Jim Katkin – said that in the past there were 50 to 55 pupils with no staff increase. Cost of workbooks and incidentals are minimal and that the current level of staffing could support that many children. Regarding the per pupil cost, the heating bill would be the same whether it be for 2 or 50.
- Tom Hourihan – says the issues were never about the money. We tried to get kids in but there was no interest. But, this is a budget issue and he felt the money could be spent in better ways.
- Leila Richardson – She states from recent observations, the school supporters through fund raisers pay for many items normally funded through the tax rate. The budget requested is quite reasonable. Class sizes are a widespread problem however, just look how lucky we are.
- Patty Borkland – echoed that her concerns are nothing to do with money, it is socialization.
- Doreen Stern – The teachers should be accountable for just sliding students through 6 or 7 years ago.
- Deirdre Link – These items would be helpful if they were brought to light to the school board.
- Tom Hourihan – This is about money today – this being a budget meeting. \$26,000 p/pupil. Maybe today's experiences are different. \$26,000 is ridiculous.
- John Klanchesser – Where does the \$26,000 figure come from? We have no say in what Portsmouth charges for other attendees.
- Jim Katkin – went on to explain that when you take the total expenditures and divide by the number of students you come up with that number. The middle school cost per pupil is \$12,890 and high school is \$ 13,713 with it going to \$ 14,036 next year. These numbers do not include transportation.
- Justin Richardson – One must subtract the fix costs and look at the variables per student to get a more realistic number.
- Tom Hourihan – asked what the budget committee look at when reviewing the school budget and if the number of students continued to decline, would they approach the school board for a plan B ?
- Chr. Lamson – answered by stating the budget committee recognizes the fact that this per pupil cost is high.
- Tom Hourihan – asked about projections of students in the future.
- Jim Katkin – noted that there is a method for projecting numbers into the future – you take the percentage vs births, vs people moving in or out of town. In 2013 we project there will be 35 students, in 2014 it shows 36 and in 2015 our numbers are indicating 33. But you must remember, a single family with three children moving into town and attending the school now effects the numbers by 10%. House prices, the economy, job market. All these factors have a bearing.
- Dave Philbrick – suggests we all move on to another subject as the discussion is now repeating itself.
- Tom Hourihan – feels this is a budget issue and should continue to be discussed. May I continue?
- Chr Lamson – stated that this is a public hearing.
- Tom Hourihan – speaks of families moving in. The budget committee should ask if we are spending too much.
- John Klanchesser – asked if there was a time limit to speak about the school as the budget committee recommended what was presented by the school.
- Chr. Lamson – speaking on behalf of the budget committee, they felt the justification was sufficient enough to tentatively recommend.
- Darin Sabine – asked Tom Hourihan if he was asking if the budget committee will come to a point in the future where they may feel with the school being open with low pupil count might the costs not be justified.
- Tom Hourihan – answered that he questioned the value the committee is supporting with this school budget request. He stated that the committee one day must ask themselves if keeping it open is feasible.
- Darin Sabine – stated that a few years ago there was a vote to keep the school open. The 2% budget fluxuation over a period of 10 years is not bad. He went on to say that this is being fiscally responsible. It is not the budget committees place to decide to keep it open or not, it is the town's.
- Selectmen's Rep Jack O'Reilly – stated that over the past 22 years he has seen everything – departments or elected personnel represent their needs. The budget committees look at the

justifications of the requests. If they are justified and reasonable, they proceed with recommendation. And we feel it is right. The Town portion of the budget request is down \$55,000 from last year. As a former teacher, there was never a student from Newington that he wasn't glad to have in his class room. It is a reflection of parents and our educational foundation. Regarding socialization, we have a good mix and are doing well. We don't have low income housing like other communities and if we did, costs would fluxuate in other manners.

***Chr. Lamson then declared the public hearing closed at 2:03pm.*** Chr. Lamson then called for the vote on \$ 1,880,244.

•G Pare – added that the budget committee discussed the budget at length at the school presentation.

***Motion passed 8-0.***

***With that, Chairman Lamson called for a brief break giving the committee time to sign the MS – 27.***

***At 2:18pm, Chairman Lamson called the meeting back to order.***

**Gail Pare moved to accept \$ 5,987,427 for the town budget. VC Gail Klanchesser seconded.**

**Chr. Lamson opened the public hearing.**

•Selectman O'Reilly stated that the warrant article request was down from last year \$20,000 and that overall, we are showing a \$ 55,494 decrease, which represents about a 6 cent reduction in the rate.

•Tom Hourihan wanted it on the record that this was a fabulous budget committee and that they did a fine job. He asked if there was something that he, as a tax payer should be aware of that is a concern of the budget committee.

•Chr. Lamson – answered that medical expenses are a concern. He then spoke of the formation of a committee to study the options.

•Selectman O'Reilly added that health care costs have been a concern for years. About 6 years ago there was a warrant article brought forth which failed, that asked the employees to contribute. The Selectmen asked if there were any interested employees that would be willing to research options to save the town money. Currently they are looking at a program that would raise the deductible, which would lower the town premium, with the town contributing towards the deductible, there would still be a substantial savings. Hopefully next year we can bring something forward to reduce costs to the town.

•Liz Taccetta – She too is concerned with health care costs.

•Justin Richardson – He looked into the municipal costs vs private sector costs and they were running about the same, however the benefit was greater.

•John Klanchesser – asked why the big increase in the Old Parsonage lines.

•Selectman O'Reilly spoke of the building maintenance needed with the rot and moisture. He stated that the town was still aggressive on funding building maintenance and because of the donor town contribution, that was the area neglected for a number of years. We are catching up. Although down for 2011, it is still nicely funded.

•Michael Marconi – asked about the Coakley line on page 3.

•Selectman O'Reilly mentioned that this was dealing with the land closing and it projects out still for quite a few years. Regarding COAST funding, you will find this funded under the planning department's budget.

•Tom Hourihan – so medical is a big concern – as noted for Liz and John – he has not surveyed the rest of the budget committee.

•Selectman O'Reilly – Retirement increases every year. 80% of the police and fire budget represent personnel costs. Jack then encouraged anyone in the audience to get involved and join the budget committee as it was a great place to start to get to know the operation.

•G. Klanchesser – noted how frustrating it was as some costs were uncontrollable but also marvels at the departments efforts to operate with so little.

•L. Taccetta – asked if retirement is that of the State and stated that health care costs could be altered by the town.

•Selectman O'Reilly – said that years ago the health programs were changed without warning and it caused problems. The will of the town was to fund 100% of the health care costs until another vote is taken.

A petition warrant article could come in but the employees wanted to be pro-active in exploring other options out there yet trying to keep the level of benefit where it is.

•L Taccetta – felt that perhaps the town paying 100% is something that should be explored as an employee contribution is not unreasonable.

•Selectman O'Reilly added that when the teachers were asked to contribute, their salary bases were adjusted.

•Selectmen Chr. Jan Stuart – stated that the system has held this way providing the Police and Fire Departments do not unionize

•Chr. Lamson – the Police and Fire Departments do not have a bargaining unit and this is a good faith agreement with the town.

•G Pare – The budget committee has tried to be forward thinking in dealing with major projects. The budget committee has encouraged the development of a unified step policy also supported the development of a health cost study group.

•Chr. Lamson – The step system eliminated random raises. There have been no COLA adjustments in two years.

•Tom Hourihan questioned the fact that the employees did not contribute to the premium

Premium Review as stated by Jack O'Reilly:

Health	Comp 100	BC 3 Tier	MC3
Single Plan	852.57	762.07	483.32
2-Person	1,705.14	1,524.15	
Family	2,301.93	2,057.60	per month

•G Klanchesser– noted that elected officials may also opt to pay into the health plan as part of the group

•Selectman O'Reilly – currently we have four. As far as co-pays, that depends on the plan

•L Taccetta – this is being analyzed and will be reviewed for next year.

•T Hourihan – This is such an unusual benefit.

•Selectman O'Reilly – A petition warrant article needs 25 signatures as submitted in the past but failed

•L Taccetta – Currently this is an agreement. The health cost study committee continues to research.

•D Sabine – The budget committee can only address the bottom line and cannot take from line items. Darin felt the Selectmen have and continue to look into this. The City of Dover offers the employees money to not take the City's insurance. It is cheaper to give them \$ 8,000 than to pay \$ 28,000 for a family policy.

•Selectman O'Reilly – The decision to pay 100% was a vote of the people at town meeting 7 or 9 years ago. This committee hopes to offer means to save the town money once they have reviewed the options.

•Chr. Lamson – welcomed anyone who wanted to get involved to participate on the budget committee.

•T Hourihan – feels this issue should be revisited

•D Sabine – The committee continues to do their review

•P Borkland – was on the Fox Point Committee and asked if she could discuss Fox Point today.

•Chr Lamson – suggested that Fox Point come up during the warrant article discussion – Article 13.

•T Hourihan – wanted to know the largest increases

•Selectman O'Reilly – answered the bond for the garage increased debt service by \$ 34,000

Assessing up \$ 12,000

Bldg Maint down a bit

but all in all, the departments came in very closely with last year.

•T Hourihan – asked if the budget committee were amicable towards each other

•Chr. Lamson – said the members worked very well together

•G Pare – noted the budget committee scrutinized the requests of each department

•T Hourihan – said he was just seeing if the budget committee stood behind their recommendations.

- G Klanchesser – stated that this public hearing was for financial issues not to see if the budget committee all got along. She went on to say that the budget committee were all volunteers and participated in the budget process because they wanted to.

- Justin Richardson – hoped we could all move on to warrant articles

- Chr Lamson - agreed and closed the public hearing at 3:05pm**

- Chr Lamson then called for the vote on \$5,987,427 - Motion passed 8-0.**

**General Government - \$ 1,888,181 – G Klanchesser moved to accept. G Pare seconded**

- G Pare - then asked if money will be added to the Cap Outlay for air packs.

- Fire Chief Dale Sylvia – asked to address the issue and went on to say that he was very thankful and appreciated the town's concern with safety. The negotiations proved to be beneficial of late as the company just offered \$ 120,000 in free air packs plus \$ 25,000 credit for other equipment. Chief Sylvia cautioned that these new style units have yet to be used so asked that the town consider reducing the WA recommendation down from \$60,000 to \$40,000 with this \$ 40,000 acting like a reserve.

- Chr Lamson – noted that a motion for a reduction would come from the floor at town meeting.

- G Klanchesser - reviewed the options discussed at the budget committee's last meeting

- Chf Sylvia – added that he hoped it would remain as a warrant article as it would be non lapsing and there if and when needed for air pack replacement purpose. He stated former Chf. Wahl was on board.

- D Sabine – asked if the garage bond was used to its entirety

- Selectman O'Reilly – answered yes but we do have funds in the highway garage capital reserve

- Chr Lamson – then called for the vote of \$ 1,888,181 – Motion passed 8-0**

**Planning Dept - \$ 161,093 G Klanchesser so moved G Pare seconded Motion passed 8-0**

**Cemetery - \$ 19,650 G Pare so moved J O'Reilly seconded Motion passed 8-0**

**Police Dept - \$1,324,711 G Pare so moved G Klanchesser seconded Motion passed 8-0**

**Fire Department - \$ 1,299,057 G Pare so moved G Klanchesser seconded Motion passed 7-0-1 with D Sabine abstaining**

**Highway Dept - \$478,675 G Pare so moved G Klanchesser seconded Motion passed 8-0**

**Sewer Dept - \$ 660,688 G Pare so moved G Klanchesser seconded Motion passed 8-0**

**Recreation - \$ 37,825 G Pare so moved G Klanchesser seconded Motion passed 8-0**

**Library - \$98,356 G Pare so moved G Klanchesser seconded Motion passed 8-0**

**HDC - \$3,500 J O'Reilly so moved D Sabine seconded Motion passed 6-0-2 with J Lamson & G Pare abstaining**

**Conservation - \$ 15,691 G Pare so moved Darin Sabine seconded Motion passed 8-0**

**At 3:20, Chr. Lamson opened the public hearing for the Warrant Articles**

**#3 - Town Wide budget \$5,987,427 G Pare moved to recommend G Klanchesser seconded Motion passed 8-0**

**#4 - Cemetery - No comments**

**#5 – Tricentennial – establish cap res – and to fund for \$ 7,000**

- T Hourihan - asked if \$ 7,000 was sufficient

- J O'Reilly – answered that the committee is working so hard in raising funds. There is also \$3,000 in the operating budget for items needed now. He stated that we are hoping to raise half and to seek out corporate donations. He expected that next year additional money will be asked for. Total expected to need is \$ 50,000 to \$ 60,000 as a rough figure.

- T Hourihan – stated that this is a very significant celebration and is supportive of the cause. He asked how to increase the WA requested amount

- J O'Reilly – answered that it can only be done from the floor at town meeting.

**#6 – Conservation Fund - No comments**

**#7 – Mott Pond Drainage**

- J Pare suggested a coffer damn while the dam is being fixed and suggested the pond be drained to kill the milfoil.

- Selectman Iocovozzi – noted that with the new technology, a sleeve may be inserted and that the town continues to work with the engineers. He did caution, however that if Mott Pond was drained, it may cause problems elsewhere with the wash down with DES

- J Pare – hopes the milfoil will be addressed in the process
- Selectman O'Reilly felt this year we will probably move forward with engineering so we know where we stand.
- Selectman Iovocozzi – said saving the road is important in the process
  - J Richardson – agreed that draining would make sense as the milfoil is a nuisance and will spread.

**#8 - Fire Department Vehicle Fund** – No comments

**#9 – Ambulance and Major Medical Fund** – No comments

**#10 – Highway Vehicle Replacement fund** – No comments

**#11 – Major Road Projects fund** – No comments

**#12 – Police Electronic Fund** – No comments

**#13 – Fox Point Pavilion Fund**

- P Borkland – was on the Fox Point Committee and stated that the quotes that came in were under the amount we have in that fund right now. This would be a phased project with hope that it would be tied into the Carriage House in some way in the future.
- J Richardson – asked if the construction slash renovation wording was new
- Selectman O'Reilly – answered the purpose was changed to include both words a few years ago
- #14 – SCBA** - Chr. Lamsom reminded everyone that this is the air pack warrant article referenced by the Fire Chief to fund for \$ 40,000 rather than \$ 60,000 (motion to come from floor at town meeting)
- #15 – Library** – establish cap reserve for bldg - No comment
- #16 – Petition Warrant Article** – requesting \$ 56,909 for the repair of the Patterson Lane Boat Ramp
  - Todd Guiliano was present to speak to his article. After meeting with the Selectmen, and speaking with people in the community, he felt it would be used more if repaired. Whether this be the tennis court, meeting house, or any other project, it was like any other project, that being something requiring fixing that we all ready have.
  - Rick Stern – asked if money had all ready been invested in a ramp
  - Selectman O'Reilly – answered yes, that being about \$ 35,000 on the Fox Point ramp. The erosion project continues and is separate. He goes on to say that the Selectmen closed off the Patterson Ln ramp as it was a safety issue.
  - J Pare – wondered where one would place their trailer after dropping off a boat.
  - Selectman O'Reilly – stated you would have to take it home
  - Chr Jan Stuart – said that 2 or 3 companies have expressed interest in helping to fund the ramp. The DES for one, and Sprague.
  - J Richardson - asked if it was engineered and suggests Todd weighing in with the Conservation Commission
  - P Borkland – stated that there was no land to park a trailer
  - Selectman Iovocozzi – said that he would like to see it fixed however would suggest we hold off until the boom program is finalized as discussions are ongoing.
  - Mike Marconi – The planning board has spoken of this and came to the conclusion that the Fox Point ramp was not ideal for an emergency whereas Patterson Lane is near the oil facility
  - Selectman Iovocozzi – The permit process may include plans for parking
  - T Hourihan – is very supportive of the warrant article and the way he sees it everyone is on board but the funding must be secured.
  - Chr Lamsom – agrees that the funding questions should be in place before moving forward, at least the effort.
  - Patty Borkland – mentioned that Darin Sabine indicated that there was a need for boom containers as she attended the meeting in the fall. She wanted to know if there were plans to have a building at Fox Point for these booms and also heard that perhaps a storage trailer for booms could be stored at the Fire Station. She was hoping for any new information
  - Selectman Iovocozzi – said that Patterson Lane would be a quick response area.
  - D Sabine – stated that in cases of an oil spill, tidal direction would determine the plan of attack.
  - J Richardson – added that there was a boom house at Sprague right now
  - Chr. Lamson – noted that we are addressing a warrant article for the repair of the boat ramp

- Christa Bellmare – said that she was at that fall meeting and got the impression that Patterson Ln was not good for the boom.
- D Sabine – agreed
- T Hourihan – asked if the Budget committee was in favor of this article or not
- Chr Lamson – answered by saying this was the budget committee’s first opportunity to discuss.

***At 3:58, Chairman Lamson declared the public hearing closed***

#4 - \$ 7,000 for Cemetery Cap Res – ***G Pare moved to recommend, G Klanchesser seconded – Motion passed 8-0***

#5 - \$ 7,000 for Tri-centennial establish Cap Res - ***G Pare moved to recommend, G Klanchesser seconded – Motion passed 8-0***

#6 - \$ 25,000 for Conservation Fund Cap Res - ***G Pare moved to recommend, D Sabine seconded***

- G Pare asked if the committee felt this request was funded enough.

- J Lamson – answered that amendments can come from the floor at the Town Meeting

***Motion passed 8-0***

#7 - \$5,000 for Mott Pond Cap Res - ***G Klanchesser moved to recommend, G Pare seconded – Motion passed 8-0***

#8 - \$ 25,000 for Fire Dept vehicles - repair or replacement Cap Res - ***G Klanchesser moved to recommend, J O’Reilly seconded – Motion passed 8-0***

#9 - \$ 20,000 – Ambulance Cap Res - ***G Pare moved to recommend, D Sabine seconded – Motion passed 8-0***

#10 - \$15,000 Highway vehicle repair or replacement Cap Res - ***G Pare moved to recommend, J O’Reilly seconded – Motion passed 8-0***

#11 - \$ 25,000 for major road work Cap Res- ***G Pare moved to recommend, J O’Reilly seconded – Motion passed 8-0***

#12 - \$ 5,000 for Police Dept electronics Cap Res- ***G Pare moved to recommend, J O’Reilly seconded – Motion passed 8-0***

#13 - \$15,000 for the Fox Point Pavilion Cap Res – ***J O’Reilly moved to recommend, David Mueller seconded –***

- G Pare asked if this will go out to bid when the time comes and will this \$ 15,000 go to the phases.

- J. O’Reilly stated that up to now costs came from Land Mgmt, Fox Point for the most part and yes, it would go out to bid.

***Motion passed 8-0***

#14 - \$ 60,000 for establishing Cap Res for SCBA fund - ***G Pare moved to recommend, J O’Reilly seconded – Motion passed 8-0***

#15 - \$ 50,000 for establishing a Cap Res for Library Bldg Fund – ***G Pare moved to recommend, J O’Reilly seconded***

- G Pare - asked if any plan was in place

- D. Noseworthy - Library Trustee answered not at this time but the Trustees are pursuing and added that the Library’s trust funds can be used for the building

***Budget Committee tied 4 yes /4 no (no votes were L Taccetta, D Sabine, G Klanchesser and G Pare)***

#16 – Petition Warrant Article for Ramp repair at Patterson Ln – ***D Sabine moved to recommend, G Pare seconded – Motion failed 0-8.***

***At 4:16, there was a motion to adjourn and Chairman Lamson asked the Budget Committee to be sure to sign the MS-7 before leaving.***

Respectively Submitted

Beatrice Marconi  
Administrative Assistant