

Town of Newington, NH
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Monday November 21st, 2022

Present: Chair Ted Connors, Vice-Chair Bob Blonigen, Selectman Brandon Arsenault, Finance Director Sheryl Bagley, Police Chief Mike Bilodeau, Fire Chief EJ Hoyt, Assistant Fire Chief Pat Moynihan, Town Clerk Doreen Caradonna, Planning Board Chair Denis Hebert, Road Agent Len Thomas, Fire Engineer Chair John Klanchesser, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

T. Connors called the meeting to order at 5:37pm. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Denis Hebert-COAST Funding Information:

D. Hebert updated the Board on questions asked at the last meeting. COAST ridership for Newington is 18,819 per year and 92 demand response. D. Hebert handed out a chart showing how COAST came up with their \$38,000 funding ask for 2023. COAST's total budget is \$8,015,000. The new COAST building will cost 15 million. They have secured 82% of the cost so far. They expect the Feds to pitch in 15% and get grants for the remaining amount. They currently have \$900,000 in a "rainy day" account. This account is for funding when COAST is not receiving as much funding.

COLA:

The Board discussed the 2023 COLA for town employees. The social security COLA for 2023 is 8.7%. A 3% COLA would cost the town \$64,000, a 4% COLA would cost \$86,000 and a 5% COLA would cost \$107,000. T. Connors asked M. Roy what other towns were doing. M. Roy said between 3% and 4%. B. Blonigen said that he liked 4% because it is half the social security COLA increase. B. Arsenault thought that 4% was too much and said that he was more comfortable with 3.5%, which would equal \$75,253 for the town. B. Blonigen said he could approve 3.5%. **B. Arsenault moved to recommend a 3.5% COLA for 2023. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Health & Dental Insurance:

M. Roy said that the Town would save \$44,000 if it switched to Harvard Pilgrim health insurance. B. Blonigen said that if the Town decided to go with Harvard Pilgrim, then we would have to renegotiate with the Fire Union. T. Connors asked how many towns were on Harvard Pilgrim. M. Roy responded that there were 12 towns and there are 138 towns on HealthTrust. T. Connors thought it would be risky to go with Harvard Pilgrim because there are only 12 towns sharing the load. P. Moynihan said that in the years 2021-2023, Harvard Pilgrim increase it's rates by 13.76% and HealthTrust increased by 11.70%. **B. Blonigen moved to remain with HealthTrust for 2023.**

T. Connors seconded the motion. T. Connors and B. Blonigen were in favor with B. Arsenault opposed.

STD/LTD/Life/AD&D Insurance:

M. Roy said that she had received two quotes. Met Life's rate is .231 with a guarantee of three years. Unum and Boston Mutual's rate is .24. The town had reached out to Unum and Boston Mutual to see if they would guarantee it for three years, but they didn't hear back from them. **B. Arsenault moved to switch to MetLife in 2023 for STD/LTD/Life/AD&D insurance. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

Tax Collector/Town Clerk 2023 Budget Review:

D. Caradonna presented the budget to the Selectmen. B. Blonigen congratulated D. Caradonna on her outstanding job during the 11/8/22 election. The 2023 budget is \$5,000 less than the 2022 budget. B. Arsenault questioned if two budget lines were both being charged for printing. D. Caradonna will look into it and get back to the Board.

Elections 2023 Budget Review:

The 2023 Election budget is less than the 2022 budget because there is only one election in 2023.

Highway 2023 Budget Review:

The 2023 budget is \$100,000 more than the 2022 budget. The increase is due to road projects that the Town Engineer recommended. M. Roy will be proposing an encumbrance of 2022 funds for crack sealing in 2023. B. Arsenault questioned why the town wasn't following the Rockingham Planning town road plan that was done in 2019. M. Roy said that she asked Rockingham Planning to update the plan, but they were unable to because they lost their project manager and didn't have anyone to do it. M. Roy said that the Town Engineer has updated the report for 2023 and then hopefully Rockingham Planning would do it in 2024. B. Arsenault questioned which plan to follow because the Town Engineer had come in with a completely different list of projects. M. Roy pointed out that the two major projects Altus had for 2023 were McIntyre Road and Little Bay Road, which are the same roads that Rockingham Planning had in their plan. The town isn't going to pave the bottom part of Nimble Hill Road until 2024 because of the subdivision project there. B. Arsenault would like M. Roy to take the Town Engineer information and match it with the Rockingham Planning report and come up with a plan. L. Thomas thought it was important to crack seal Woodbury Ave. B. Blonigen was glad that the vehicle maintenance line had been increased. B. Arsenault would like to take \$100,000 out of the Major Roads Capital Reserve fund to offset the increase in the Highway budget.

Debt Service 2023 Budget Review:

There is \$1 in the TAN expense line in case the Town has to borrow money if the State Education Funding court case temporary restraining order goes through and we will be unable to collect taxes. The other expense line is the SCBA lease. 2023 is the 5th year of a 7-year lease.

Capital Outlay 2023 Budget Review:

The Police Department is asking for 2 cruisers in 2023. B. Arsenault pointed out that meant that they would get 3 new cruisers in 12 months. M. Bilodeau said that several of their cruisers are getting close to 100,000 miles. The recommended mileage for cruisers in between 80,000 and 100,000 for safety purposes. There is \$19,000 for cyber security for the Police Department, the Fire Department and Town Hall. The Coakley expense line is an "unknown" each year.

Recreation 2023 Revised Budget:

The Recreation Committee has revised its budget. The activities expense line increased from \$8,000 to \$12,000 and the general maintenance line increased from \$3,000 to \$12,000.

Executive Office 2023 Budget:

M. Roy reviewed the budget with the Board. The 2023 budget is \$40,000 more than 2022. The wages expense line has increased due to the added responsibilities of the Finance Director. A scanning expense line has been added to the 2023 budget. File boxes with old files need to be shredded or scanned. The town is required to keep records for 7 years.

Code Enforcement 2023 Budget:

The salary line has increased because the Town is going to maintain the consultant for a few months in 2023. The training line has decreased. M. Roy said that the new building inspector and the consultant are working out very well and the town is fortunate to have both of them.

Pest Control 2023 Budget:

The 2023 budget is been reduced from \$32,000 in 2022 to \$26,000 in 2023.

Health and Welfare 2023 Budgets:

Each has \$1 in their budget in case services are needed.

Land Management 2023 Budget:

E. Boy reviewed the porta potties. The 2023 is \$5,000 for porta potties. That would include one at the Tennis Courts/Ice Rink for 12 months at \$95 per month, one at the Transfer Station for 12 months at \$95 per month and one at the Fox Point dock for 4 months at \$400 per month. Discussion ensued about having a porta pottie at the Old

Town Hall, possibly buying a porta pottie instead of renting. Hydrant rentals have increased by \$25 per hydrant in 2023. T. Connors suggested that they talk to Portsmouth about the hydrants when they talk to them about the water. P. Moynihan pointed out that Portsmouth doesn't give the Fire Department reports on the hydrants when they ask for them. Grounds Keeping is in their second year of a three-year contract for \$15,645. B. Arsenault asked if the town could reduce the care of trees line. M. Roy said yes.

Capital Reserve 2023:

The Board reviewed a list of all the capital reserve requests for 2023. The Fire Department has asked for a new capital reserve for their SCBA equipment. They are good now but want to start saving for the next time they have to purchase SCBA.

M. Roy said that she will total the 2023 budget, with all the requests and compare it to the 2022 budget and then make a list of recommended cuts.

B. Arsenault asked about the NHDOT Intent to Cut Permit. M. Roy said that E. Weinrieb will have his report to the Board by Monday. B. Blonigen suggested that the Intent to Cut Permit be signed in order to have a good relationship in the future. B. Arsenault suggested sending a letter with all of the Town's requests along with the permit. The land use change warrant article should be given to Conservation Commission Chair Jane Hislop to review. M. Roy said that Town Attorney John Ratigan will be at the December 5th Board meeting to discuss the warrant article. M. Roy will ask J. Hislop to attend the meeting with the town attorney. B. Arsenault asked about the bids for trash pickup. M. Roy is working on it.

Library Trustee Jack O'Reilly asked to meet with the Board on December 19th. T. Connors said that it was too late. B. Arsenault asked M. Roy to reach out to them and ask for an earlier date to meet.

B. Blonigen asked S. Bagley to put together a 2022 budget update for the December 5th meeting.

Adjournment: B. Arsenault moved to adjourn at 7:00pm. B. Blonigen seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy, Recorder