

Town of Newington, NH
Budget Committee Public Hearing Minutes
Wednesday, February 2, 2022

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

Present: John Lamson, Chair, Brandon Arsenault, Vice-Chair, Chris Wayss, Alan Wilson, Jamie Belanger, Rick Stern, Emily Savinelli, Jennifer Kent Weiner and Selectmen's Rep, Ted Connors

Guests: Bob Blonigen-Selectman, Denis Hebert-Planning Board Chair, Mike Bilodeau-Police Chief, EJ Hoyt-Fire Chief, Patrick Moynihan-Assistant Fire Chief, Brenda Blonigen-Police Commissioner Chair, Bill Wright-Police Commissioner, Jackie Hoyt-Police Commissioner, Taylor Fiore-Police Admin Assistant, Lara Berry-Library Director, Rebecca Navelski-Recreation Committee Chair, Jack O'Reilly-Recreation Committee, John Klanchesser-Board of Fire Engineers Chair, Ann Hyland Hebert- Fire Engineer, Jim Fabrizio-Fire Engineer, Denis Messier – Sewer Plant Manager, Jeff Hiatt-Economic Development Committee Chair, Steven Paquin-Building Inspector, Newington School Principal Peter Latchaw, SAU50 Superintendent Salvatore Petralia, SAU50 Business Administrator Susan Penny, Paul Deschaine-Economic Development Coordinator, Sheryl Bagley-Finance Director, Martha Roy-Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder. Other residents and employees were present.

School Budget Review:

J. Lamson reviewed the School Operating Budget for the Newington School District. The operating budget decreased from the previous year, however if the union contract warrant article passes then the budget will be more than in 2021.

Article 1: Proposed Operating Budget. E. Savinelli moved to recommend Article 1 in the amount of \$2,398,777. C. Wayss seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued about the Newington School's enrollment, the cost of each student for the taxpayers, the union contract and middle and high school tuition costs. Newington's share of the SAU administration office expenses increased by 10% due to the increased assessed values in Newington. B. Arsenault asked that the School Board keep a close eye on this cost to the Newington tax payers in the future.

J. Lamson called for a vote on Article 1. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 2: Collective Bargaining Agreement:

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 2. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 3: Call a Special Meeting:

E. Savinelli moved to recommend Article 3. C. Wayss seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

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

The Budget Committee commented on Article 9 the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Firefighters Union. J. Kent Weiner asked about the increases each year. P. Moynihan said that the first year catches the firefighters up because they haven't gotten an increase in several years during the union negotiations then the firefighters get a 2% COLA plus steps increases. J. Lamson said that the department has to stay competitive with the surrounding departments.

Recreation Committee Chair Rebecca Navelski commented about Article 17, \$10,000 to hire a seasonal recreation director. This person would help the Recreation Committee with larger events and to be the liaison between the summer camp and the town. G. Klanchesser asked what months the position would be for. R. Navelski said during the summer. J. O'Reilly said that the town used to have a recreation director. There were lots of trips and activities for the residents. The Recreation Committee is losing members because of "burn out". If the YMCA doesn't agree to do the summer camp, then the town will definitely need a recreation director. J. Belanger thought that the summer camp in 2021 was one of the best ones so far and credits the volunteers that made it happen. J. Belanger thinks this warrant article is appropriate.

The Budget Committee commented on Article 20 to establish a fund known as Body Worn Cameras and Cruiser Mounted Audio and Video Equipment. M. Bilodeau said that this fund is needed because when this equipment is mandated, he doesn't know if it will be funded or unfunded. This fund would be added to each year to build it up to 50% cost of the equipment.

Article 19 is to replace major fire equipment over a cost of \$5,000. The "jaws of life" cost is \$25,000.

Jessica Morgan commented on Article 21 to raise \$25,000 for purchasing equipment for the playground behind the Old Town Hall. The money would be used to purchase a zip line or replace the slides. J. Morgan thinks it is important to invest in the children. This playground is an important part of the summer program. G. Klanchesser said that there is over \$36,000 in the Recreation Capital Reserve Fund and asked why this money couldn't be used for this project. R. Navelski said that the capital reserve funds will be used for major maintenance on the tennis court, baseball field, soccer field and basketball court. The Recreation Committee supports this warrant article. G. Klanchesser thought that all the recreation money should be under one capital reserve

fund. J. Morgan said that she didn't want to drain the recreation committee capital reserve fund. B. Wright said that resurfacing the tennis courts costs \$9,000. J. Lamson that this is a major new investment. The capital reserve fund is to maintain existing equipment and feels having this as a separate item is appropriate.

J. Lamson closed the public hearing at 7:08pm.

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of Seven Million, Nine Hundred Seven Thousand, Three Hundred and Sixty-Six Dollars (\$7,907,366) for the operating budget. This article does not include appropriations voted in special or individual warrant articles addressed separately.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 7 for \$7,907,366. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

E. Savinelli asked about the insurance rates for 2022. M. Roy said that these were the amounts that the insurance company, made up of a pool of towns and cities, gave her for 2022. E. Savinelli asked about the safety program expense line. M. Roy said that this is used for the CDL testing each year. J. Kent Weiner asked about the EDC over expenditure for contracted services. M. Roy explained that this money was paid to a consultant before the budget had been finalized. The Police capital outlay account was overspent because the equipment was more than expected. M. Bilodeau explained that he has to guess at this number each year because the state's bid process for cruisers isn't completed by budget season.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$200,000 to be placed in the Replacement of Vehicles Operated by the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund.

C. Wayss moved to recommend Article 8. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 9: Collective Bargaining Agreement: Shall the Town of Newington vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Newington and the Professional Firefighters of Newington, IAFF Local 4104, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Estimated Costs</u>
2022	\$181,872
2023	\$ 51,749
2024	\$ 54,062
2025	\$ 56,628
2026	\$ 58,991

And further to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Eighty-One Thousand, Eight Hundred Seventy-Two Dollars (\$181,872) for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at the current staffing levels.

E. Savinelli moved to recommend Article 9. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be added to the Major Road Work Capital Reserve Fund.

B. Arsenault asked about the upcoming projects in 2022. M. Roy said that this is part of the Capital Improvement Plan for the four major roads in town, Woodbury, Shattuck, Gosling and Piscataqua. The north end of Gosling needs to be completed and then Shattuck Way.

R. Stern moved to recommend Article 10. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise an appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be placed in the Replacement of the Town Ambulance and any Major Medical Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 11. C. Wayss seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 12: 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. Kent Weiner moved to recommend Article 12. C. Wayss seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) to be added to the Replacement of Vehicles Operated by the Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund.

E. Savinelli moved to recommend Article 13. B. Arsenault seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to be placed in the Town Recreation Facilities and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Kent Weiner moved to recommend Article 14. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

E. Savinelli pointed out that there is \$36,000 in this fund now, if the Town votes to add \$10,000, the Recreation Committee could use \$9,000 for the needed tennis course maintenance and \$4,000 for the ballfields and there would be \$33,000 remaining which would be enough to do the \$30,000 proposed zip line. B. Arsenault asked if Article 21 (Zip Line) is defeated, could this fund be used for the zip line. J. O'Reilly responded, probably not. J. O'Reilly suggested that Article 21 be moved up in the voting procedures to before this warrant article. If Article 21 is defeated then more money could be added to this warrant article. E. Savinelli said she would feel more comfortable putting money into the existing capital reserve fund. J. Lamson said that changing the sequence would work. J. Kent Weiner asked about the maintenance cost of the zip line. J. Morgan said that there is a warrantee and no maintenance. C. Wayss asked about a yearly inspection requirement. J. Morgan said there was none.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 15: 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.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 15. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 16: To see if the Town will vote to establish a capital reserve fund known as the Historical Preservation Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of preserving the town's historical documents and ephemera and making them for accessible to the public and further to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) with the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from this fund.

C. Wayss moved to recommend Article 16. A. Wilson seconded the motion.

E. Savinelli didn't feel that there was enough information about the project. The scope of the project, the overall cost and if \$10,000 is just the beginning. J. Lamson said this money would be used to study the items that the town has. C. Wayss pointed out that the minutes from the previous meeting said that these funds would be used to work with a volunteer to document and catalog historical items that the town has. J. Kent Weiner said that she is struggling with the process. J. Belanger said that he thought it was a worthy project but has no business plan.

J. Lamson called for a vote. 3 in favor and 5 opposed. The article is not recommended.

Article 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) for the purpose of hiring a Seasonal Recreation Director.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 17. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

E. Savinelli asked if the Town had a contract with the YMCA for 2022. M. Roy said that the YMCA notified the town that they would do the summer camp in 2022, but there is not a contract yet. J. O'Reilly said that if the YMCA doesn't do the camp, this person would set up the program and hire the staff. If the Y does the camp, then this person would be the liaison between the Y and the Town. The Director's role could be expanded if it works and would appear in the Recreation budget in 2023. E. Savinelli thought that it was late to not have a contract for summer camp. C. Wayss said that he had attended the Recreation Committee meeting this week and heard that the Y is planning to have Greenland and Newington share a summer camp director in 2022. It is important to have someone there. B. Arsenault thought that it is a great cause, but there isn't a plan yet.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 18: 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.

C. Wayss moved to recommend Article 18. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 19: 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.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 19. C.Wayss seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 20: To see if the Town will vote to establish a capital reserve fund known as the Body Worn Cameras and Cruiser Mounted Audio and Video Equipment Capital Reserve Fund and further to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500) to be placed in said fund.

J. Kent Weiner moved to recommend Article 20. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

B. Arsenault asked if they could save any money with refits of their current devices. M. Bilodeau said that the systems in the cruisers are old.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor 8-0.

Article 21: On a petition of resident Jessica Morgan of 116 Fox Point Road and at least 24 other registered voters in the Town of Newington, shall the Town of Newington vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) for the purpose of purchasing additional equipment for the playground behind the Old Town Hall with the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 21. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

B. Arsenault thought that \$25,000 is a large number to ask for. J. Belanger supports the switching of the order of the warrant articles. If this warrant article doesn't pass then more money can be added to the Recreation Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were opposed 0-8.

Minutes Approval January 26, 2022:

E. Savinelli moved to approve the January 26, 2022 minutes. A. Wilson seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

M. Roy addressed J. Kent Weiner's concern from the Committee's last meeting that the 2021 budget for the Town Buildings was \$20,140 less than what was voted on by the Budget Committee. M. Roy pointed out that at the January 20, 2021 Budget Committee meeting, B. Arsenault made a motion to reduce the Town Buildings budget from \$220,290 to \$200,150 which is \$20,140 less. The Budget Committee then voted to reduce the Town Building budget to \$200,150. M. Roy stated that there were no errors. J. Kent Weiner voiced concern that some individual budget lines were different. E. Boy reminded the committee that they can only reduce the bottom line of a budget not individual lines. J. Kent Weiner still had questions, M. Roy said that she could contact her later for specific answers.

B. Arsenault moved to adjourn at 8:14pm. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. All were in favor.

**Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy, Recorder**