

Town of Newington, NH  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 20, 2021 Via Zoom

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

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically.

**Present Via Zoom:** John Lamson, Chair, Brandon Arsenault, Vice-Chair, William Wright, Emily Savinelli, Jennifer Kent Weiner, Sandy Sweeney, Alan Wilson, John Chamberlain, Ted Connors-Selectmen's Rep, Samara Robertson, School Board Rep, Mike Marconi, Selectman, Ken Latchaw, Selectman, Peter Latchaw, Newington School Principal, Salvatore Petralia, SAU 50 Superintendent, Mindy Ryan, SAU 50 Business Administrator, Sarah Reinhardt, SAU 50 Special Education Director, Kelli Killen, SAU 50 Assistant Superintendent, Brain Grattan, SAU 50 Director of Technology, Fire Chief EJ Hoyt, Assistant Fire Chief Pat Moynihan, Board of Fire Engineers Chair John Klanchesser, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Fire Engineer Jim Fabrizio, Police Chief Mike Bilodeau, Derrick Willson, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

**Minutes Approval:**

**E. Savinelli moved to approve the minutes of January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021. T. Connors seconded the motion.**

E. Savinelli asked that the minutes include her request that the town look into alternative methods of pest control in 2021.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to approve the January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 minutes as amended. T. Connors-yes, S. Robertson-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, S. Sweeney-abstain, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-yes. All in favor.**

**School District Budget Review:**

S. Robertson wanted to commend the school on doing an incredible job this year and said that the School Board was proud of what they had accomplished and was proud to work with them.

**E. Savinelli moved to tentatively approve the School budget of \$2,338,635. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.**

M. Ryan presented the School budget to the committee.

M. Ryan pointed out that the actual amount of the budget was \$2,412,439 because the gross operating budget has to include a grant for \$40,000 and the food service fund of \$33,804.

The school budget was level funded for the budget lines that the local school administration has control over. The overall 2021-2022 budget is 7.02% higher than the 2020-2021 budget. The increase was due to higher costs for tuition students sent to Portsmouth, retirement and health & dental. J. Lamson asked about the large increase for tuition middle school students. M. Ryan said that there were only 8 middle school students in 2020-2021, but there will be 14 in the 2021-2022 school year. The transportation budget line increased by 3% due to an existing contract. E. Savinelli is surprised that transportation is higher because there is only one morning bus this year. P. Latchaw explained that this budget is for the 2021-2022 school year and they are hoping that they will be back to two morning buses at that time. B. Arsenault asked about the tuition rates for middle and high school students. M. Ryan said that middle school is \$20,528 and high school is \$18,742. B. Arsenault asked what the cost per student at the elementary school was. M. Ryan didn't know the exact amount because there are many different factors that make up the costs. J. Kent Weiner said that it is important to know the cost per student so the committee can analyze if the cost per student is efficient for the tax payer. B. Arsenault asked how many tuition students they expected at the school in 2021-2022. P. Latchaw is not sure yet. B. Arsenault said that the cost per student is important because if it is really high then it might be better to send the students to Portsmouth for a lesser amount. J. Lamson said that the State lists the cost as \$28,900 on their website. B. Arsenault asked who was in charge of setting the Newington Elementary tuition rate. P. Latchaw said the School Board. They looked at the local private schools in the area to determine the tuition. B. Arsenault asked why they looked at private schools instead of other SAU 50 schools. P. Latchaw said that at the time Newington was the only SAU 50 schools that was accepting tuition students. J. Chamberlain asked how many students attended the Newington School. P. Latchaw said a total number of 52 with 7 tuition students included in that number. J. Chamberlain asked how many special needs children. S. Reinhardt answered between 5-10. B. Arsenault asked about the proposed new phone system. B. Grattan answered that the current phone system is between 12-15 years old and needs to be replaced. The new system will be a "voice over IP" system. It will provide more security. B. Wright asked how the school ensures that they are getting all the grants available. K. Killen summarized the three types of grants that SAU 50 pursues. S. Petralia said that SAU 50 had received grants to offset the Covid expenses in 2020. B. Wright asked if there were any capital outlay projects for the school. S. Petralia said no. J. Kent Weiner asked if the school was

still using IPADs and how long they last. P. Latchaw said that grades 3-6 have mac books and they have a life of about nine years. B. Arsenault asked about warrant article#2 that asked to increase the amount of money that can be retained from the preceding year from 2.5% to 5%. M. Ryan said that they want to have the option depending on the year and the expenses. S. Petralia said that the School Board will choose the amount each year. \$167,000 was returned for the 2020-2021 budget.

**E. Savinelli made a motion to amend Warrant Article #1 to \$2,412,439. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.**

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to approve Warrant Article #1 as amended. T. Connors-yes, S. Robertson-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, S. Sweeney-abstain, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-yes.**

**E. Savinelli made a motion to approve Warrant Article #2. B. Arsenault seconded the motion.**

E. Savinelli said that she supported this warrant article because it allows the School Board flexibility and they have been fiscally responsible.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to approve Warrant Article #2. T. Connors-yes, S. Robertson-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, S. Sweeney-abstain, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-yes. All in favor.**

J. Lamson complimented the school staff on managing to have live classes 4 days a week and he is grateful for what they are doing during the pandemic.

J. Lamson called for a two-minute break.

J. Lamson called the meeting back to order.

J. Lamson reminded the Budget Committee that they can't modify the warrant articles they can just recommend or not recommend.

**B. Arsenault moved to recommend Warrant Article #2 and to not recommend Warrant Article #3. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.**

**Article#2 is to add \$200,000 to the Replacement of Vehicles Operated by the Fire Department Capital.**

**Article#3 is to lease/purchase a new fire engine.**

J. Lamson said that the committee was choosing to recommend buying a fire truck or doing a lease/purchase to purchase the fire truck.

E. Hoyt said that the \$200,000 warrant article was part of the Fire Department's Capital Improvement Plan. J. Lamson asked what the Board of Fire Engineer's recommendation was. E. Hoyt said that they support the Capital Improvement Plan but also understand the current economic situation and if the Town can't commit to the \$200,000, they support the lease/purchase plan. P. Moynihan said that there are pros and cons to both plans. The \$200,000 would support a purchase with no interest. There would be \$90,000 in interest for the lease. B. Wright asked what would happen at the end of the lease. P. Moynihan said that the department would own it. The life of the engine would be 25 years. Interest rates are very low now for the lease. B. Arsenault asked if the town would be putting any money down. P. Moynihan said that there are many options for amount put down and the length of the lease. E. Savinelli thought that the town should take advantage of the low interest rates and we would be gambling if the rates went up. Delivery of the truck would be in September 2022.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote on the motion to accept Article#2 and reject Article#3. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-no, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor. Seven in favor, one opposed.**

**Article#4: To add \$132,000 to the Major Road Work Capital Reserve.**

J. Kent Weiner asked if the \$132,000 would come from the unassigned fund money. M. Roy said that this is the 2021 \$132,000 payment to the Town from Eversource. The Town hasn't received the money yet. J. Kent Weiner asked how much money was in the unassigned fund balance. M. Roy said approximately \$2.3 million. J. Kent Weiner asked why the Town hadn't used any of the money from the unassigned fund balance to lower the tax rate. M. Roy said that the Town used \$175,000 from the unassigned funds. J. Kent Weiner thought that more money should have been used to offset the tax rate increase. E. Savinelli is disappointed that the tax rate increased. M. Roy said that the balance in the Major Road Work capital reserve fund is currently \$407,620.12, but \$170,000 will be paid out for Woodbury Ave. in the next couple of weeks and another \$100,000 in the near future. J. Lamson asked if the Town could use some unanticipated revenue to lower the tax rate. M. Roy said yes. E. Savinelli asked how much was added to this capital reserve account last year. M. Roy said \$132,000.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#4. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-no, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-no, J. Lamson-Yes. Six in favor, two opposed.**

**Article#5: To add \$55,000 to the Major Road Work Capital Reserve.**

J. Kent Weiner asked how the committee can get this amount applied to lower the tax rate next year. J. Lamson said that they could vote down this article and it would go into the unassigned funds. E. Savinelli said that she is in favor of following the road maintenance plan, but \$132,000 was just added to this capital reserve account and is not in favor of putting in anymore. B. Arsenault pointed out that the road maintenance recommendations are in the Highway budget. J. Lamson pointed out that when money is put into a capital reserve account then the Board of Selectmen can vote to spend money out of it. If the Budget Committee doesn't recommend this article and the Town votes it down, then the money goes into the unassigned fund balance. M. Roy said that this \$55,000 would be used to complete the rest of Gosling Road.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#5. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-no, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-no, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-no, J. Lamson-Yes. Five in favor, three opposed.**

**Article#6: To purchase a Pickup Truck for the Fire Department for \$50,000.**

**E. Savinelli moved to recommend Warrant Article #6. A. Wilson seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson asked what this truck would be used for. E. Hoyt said it would replace the Assistant Chief's car. P. Moynihan said that this truck is cheaper than an SUV.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#6. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-no, J. Lamson-Yes. Seven in favor, one opposed.**

**Article#7: To add \$50,000 to the Replacement of the Town Ambulance and any Major Medical Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.**

**E. Savinelli moved to recommend Warrant Article #7. B. Arsenault seconded the motion.**

No Discussion.

J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#7. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.

**Article#8: To add \$25,000 to the Major Repairs of Vehicles Operated to the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund.**

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Warrant Article #8. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

B. Arsenault asked E. Hoyt how much was needed in the fund. E. Hoyt said that it could be capped at \$50,000.

J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#8. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.

**Article#9: To add \$25,000 to the Town Wide Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund.**

J. Kent Weiner moved to recommend Warrant Article #9. B. Arsenault seconded the motion.

No discussion.

J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#9. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.

**Article#10: To add \$25,000 to the Replacement of Vehicles Operated by the Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund.**

E. Savinelli moved to recommend Warrant Article #10. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

J. Kent Weiner asked how much the new backhoe would cost. M. Roy said \$105,000 for a new backhoe, but the Town is looking at purchasing a used one or leasing one.

J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#10. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-no, J. Lamson-Yes. Seven in favor, one opposed.

**Article#11: To raise \$15,000 for the Board of Fire Engineers to purchase gym equipment.**

**E. Savinelli moved to recommend Warrant Article #11. A. Wilson seconded the motion.**

B. Arsenault asked if the Fire Department could raise money for gym equipment instead of asking the taxpayers to pay for it. E. Hoyt said, at this time, no. The old equipment was donated, they have purchased a treadmill. The Fire Department has a policy that the firefighters have to work out for at least 20 minutes each shift. E. Hoyt doesn't want his staff going to the gym at this time. J. Kent Weiner asked how the department would spend the \$15,000, do they have a plan. E. Hoyt said that one of the firefighters has experience in this area and has planned it out. B. Arsenault asked if the Police Department has gym equipment. E. Hoyt said that they can't go into the Police Station when there is no one there. J. Kent Weiner asked if money from the unassigned fund balance could be used to purchase this equipment. J. Lamson explained that all expenses have to appear in the budget. M. Roy said that the goal was to keep \$2.3 million in the unassigned fund balance so the Town wouldn't have to borrow funds during the year. A. Hyland Hebert that firefighters have a requirement for physical fitness. This request is not a want, but a necessity.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#11. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-no, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-no, J. Lamson-Yes. Six in favor, two opposed.**

**Article#12: To add \$10,000 to the Fire Department Communications Capital Reserve Fund.**

**B. Arsenault moved to recommend Warrant Article #12. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.**

B. Arsenault asked E. Hoyt how much was needed in the fund. E. Hoyt said that it could be capped at \$20,000.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#12. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.**

**Article#13: To establish and add \$10,000 to the Police Department Computer Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.**

**B. Arsenault moved to recommend Warrant Article #13. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.**

B. Arsenault asked what the Police Department is saving for. M. Bilodeau that they will be replacing their server. B. Arsenault asked what the fund could be capped at. M. Bilodeau said \$30,000. The Police Department will need a separate server when they get bodycams in the future.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#13. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.**

**Article#14: To add \$10,000 to the Town Generators Capital Reserve Fund.**

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

J. Kent Weiner asked how much a new generator would cost. M. Roy said \$40,000. There are four generators in town. One at the Town Hall, one at the Police Station, one at the Fire Station and one at the Town Garage. M. Roy said that the Police Station generator will need to be replaced in the near future. J. Chamberlain asked about the history of use for the generators. P. Moynihan said that they automatically come on when the power goes out. The garage doors at the Fire Station, Police Station and the Garage can't open without power.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#14. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.**

**Article#15: To add \$5,000 to the Police Department Radio/Electronics Capital Reserve Fund.**

**E. Savinelli moved to recommend Warrant Article #15. B. Arsenault seconded the motion.**

B. Arsenault asked M. Bilodeau how much was needed in the fund. M. Bilodeau said that it could be capped at \$25,000.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#15. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.**

**Article#16: To establish and add \$5,000 to the Replacement of Major Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.**



**B. Arsenault moved to recommend Warrant Article #16. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.**

B. Arsenault asked about a similar capital reserve fund for the Fire Department. P. Moynihan said that the other Capital Reserve Fund is for medical equipment. This fund would be for regular equipment.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote to recommend Article#16. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.**

### **Town Buildings Budget Review:**

**B. Arsenault moved to tentatively approve the Town Buildings budget of \$220,290. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.**

B. Arsenault asked why there is generator maintenance in the buildings budget when the town has a capital reserve fund for generators. E. Boy said that the capital reserve fund is to replace generators, the building budgets is for maintenance. M. Roy said that the Town Hall will be getting more outlets in the auditorium. The Old Town Hall will have the exterior painted. The Meeting House will have the door and window fans painted. The Fire Station will have their window sills and sashes replaced, a bathroom reno, asbestos tile removal and an architect will be hired to design the second-floor addition. The Police Station garage n will be water proofed, a fence will be added around the generator and the sally port ceiling will be repaired. B. Arsenault asked why the Fire Department couldn't do the fire extinguisher inspections. E. Hoyt said it had to be done by a third party. E. Savinelli asked is there were any plans to centralize heating plans for all the town buildings to keep track of the temperatures in each building. M. Roy said that she would get a report to the committee. B. Arsenault asked why the buildings budget was 25% higher in 2021 than 2020. M. Roy said that the Fire Station has many projects that have been postponed for years. T. Connors said that they are trying to catch up on the maintenance of the buildings. We can keep putting things off but it will cost us more in the future. B. Arsenault asked about the \$4,000 fence around the Police Station generator. M. Bilodeau said that getting the fence is part of the accreditation. They just got an outside camera that might be able to be used for security instead of the fence. J. Lamson said that generators can also have lockable covers. B. Arsenault asked about the water proofing for the police garage. M. Bilodeau said that they have evidence in the garage that needs to be protected.

**B. Arsenault moved to propose an amendment to decrease the Town Buildings budget to \$200,150. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.**

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote on the proposed amendment to the Town Buildings budget. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.**

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote on the Town Buildings amended budget of \$200,150. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.**

J. Lamson reminded the three members of the Budget Committee that are up for reelection, Sandy Sweeney, Bill Wright and John Lamson, that it is time to sign up.

B. Arsenault asked to talk about the \$140,000 for the Safety/Bike lane that was voted on at the 2020 town meeting. At the Town meeting it was stated that if the money was not spent in 2020, it would be returned to the unassigned fund balance, but it was encumbered by the Board of Selectmen instead. B. Arsenault believes that it should be a warrant article to raise the funds again in 2021. T. Connors said that it would be reconsidered.

J. Lamson said that the Budget Public Hearing will be on Wednesday February 3<sup>rd</sup> via Zoom.

**E. Savinelli moved to adjourn at 9:43pm. B. Arsenault seconded the motion.**

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote. T. Connors-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, B. Wright-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, J. Lamson-Yes. All in favor.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Eleanor Boy  
Recorder**