

Town of Newington, NH
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 26, 2022

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

Present: John Lamson, Chair, Brandon Arsenault, Vice-Chair, Rick Stern, Emily Savinelli, Jennifer Kent Weiner, Alan Wilson, Chris Wayss, Ted Connors, Selectmen's Rep, Bob Blonigen, Selectman, Len Thomas, Road Agent, Janis Costa-Deedy, RMON Networks, Laura Coleman, Town Clerk/Tax Collector, Steven Paquin, Building Inspector, Fire Chief EJ Hoyt, Assistant Fire Chief Pat Moynihan, Planning Board Chair Denis Hebert, Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Finance Director Sheryl Bagley and Martha Roy, Town Administrator.

Minutes Approval:

C. Wayss moved to approve the minutes of January 19th, 2022. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Highway Budget Review:

E. Savinelli moved to tentatively approve the Highway budget of \$554,098. R. Stern seconded the motion.

E. Savinelli asked why the wages line was underspent in 2021. L. Thomas said that it didn't snow that much in 2021, so the plowing wages were lower and the department lost an employee and is having a hard time getting a replacement. B. Arsenault asked why the department is asking for the same amount in contracted services when it wasn't spent completely in 2021. L. Thomas said that the lack of snow in 2021 allowed the department to underspend this line. E. Savinelli asked why \$500 was budgeted for road sweeping but \$1,400 was spent. L. Thomas said that they had not swept the roads in several years so \$1,400 is the cost to sweep now. B. Arsenault asked why road resurfacing was overspent in 2021. M. Roy explained that the Town had received \$50,000 from Eversource for road damage done during the Reliability Project. The Town used these funds to resurface Little Bay Road. The \$50,000 shows in the revenue portion of the budget which offsets the over expenditure. E. Savinelli asked about the culvert line. B. Blonigen said that \$6,000 was encumbered for the Hannah Lane project because the ground froze before it could get done. M. Roy said that she would like to make the committee aware of a potential drainage problem in town. During recent heavy rains the area by Custom Pools flooded. The Town is in discussions with the State about this issue. The town engineer believes this

drainage issue is due to the Route 16 expansion project and a culvert pipe not being big enough to drain properly during heavy rain. The State says that it is not their issue. This could potentially cost \$200,000 to fix. J. Lamson asked if it was budgeted for 2022. T. Connors said no, maybe in 2023. C. Wayss asked about the fuel line because it was overspent in 2021 and fuel prices are increasing. M. Roy said that the Town is currently out to bid for fuel pricing. E. Savinelli asked about the vehicle maintenance line being overspent by \$7,000. M. Roy said that the Ford 550 needed repairs and the Ford 350 needed its air conditioning fixed. B. Arsenault pointed out that the Ford 550 doesn't appear on the Highway Vehicle capital improvement plan. M. Roy said it would be added.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Highway budget. All were in favor.

Debt Service Budget Review:

C. Wayss moved to tentatively approve the Debt Service budget of \$27,673. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

M. Roy said that the Debt Service budget had decreased by \$83,000 due to the payoff of the Fire Truck lease in 2021.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Debt Service budget. All were in favor.

Capital Outlay Budget Review:

R. Stern moved to tentatively approve the Capital Outlay budget of \$77,590. C. Wayss seconded the motion.

M. Roy pointed out that the Coakley line had been reduced from \$80,000 to \$20,000. The Town has not heard of any mandated testing that will be done in 2022. T. Connors attends the Coakley Committee meetings and they believe the costs will be more consistent now. C. Wayss asked about the Police capital outlay expense line. M. Roy said that it is for the new cruiser and equipment. The town purchases one new police cruiser a year. E. Savinelli asked about the town's capital outlay expense line for cyber security. M. Roy said that the town had put this out to bid and have selected the ATOM Group out of Concord after a national search. Two representatives from the Town's IT support group, RMON gave an overview of what RMON does for the Town. The cost is \$1,030 per month. The 2022 contract increased due to more support in 2021, new software and software storage.

Discussion ensued about the number of service tickets recorded for the Town, what different types of service tickets, the response time for the different levels of

tickets, how the tickets are generated, memory for the server. J. Kent Weiner asked if the server is local or cloud. RMON said both. If Newington would go to 100% cloud storage it would cost \$90,000 for 5 years. The Town replaced the local server in 2019 for \$25,000, it has a 5-year life span. C. Wayss asked about what is monitored. RMON said that there are 1,750 monitors in the 2021 platforms. R. Stern asked what would happen if the server went down. RMON said that all data is backed up and could be rebuilt. There is a warranty on the server that covers 99% of problems with the server.

L. Coleman said that half of the tickets in 2021 were probably from her office. They had many issues this year and each time the State's computer had to be worked on RMON had to come to the Town Hall to allow them to access the server for security reasons. Her office has four sets of software, four separate tech people, two new printers for the State computer were added in 2021. B. Arsenault asked if she was happy with the service. L. Coleman said yes. S. Paquin said he was happy with their service too.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Capital Outlay budget. All were in favor.

Tax Collector/Town Clerk Budget Review:

E. Savinelli moved to tentatively approve the Tax Collector/Town Clerk budget of \$111,397. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

The increase to the 2022 budget is from the 3% COLA. J. Kent Weiner asked about the training line. L. Coleman said that they haven't been to any training in two years. The State used to send new information from the training sessions through emails to the town clerks but they no longer do this because they have lost so many employees at the State level. The cost is for three people for the course and lodging.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Tax Collector/Town Clerk budget. All were in favor.

Elections Budget:

J. Kent Weiner moved to tentatively approve the Elections budget of \$19,664. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

The Elections budget is more in 2022 because there are three elections and covid protocols.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Elections budget. All were in favor

Town Buildings Budget:

J. Kent Weiner handed out a worksheet showing that the 2021 Town Buildings budget was \$20,000 less than what was approved at Budget Committee in 2021 and would like an explanation.

M. Roy said that she wished that J. Kent Weiner had sent her this question earlier so that she could have done some research on it and would have had an answer for her tonight. M. Roy will get back to the committee.

J. Lamson asked that the committee vote on what the Board of Selectmen needs in the 2022 budget and then look into questions about past budgets.

E. Savinelli moved to tentatively approve the Town Buildings budget of \$151,946. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

E. Savinelli asked about the contracted services expense line in the Town Buildings Admin budget that increased by 36%. S. Paquin explained that he had increased this line due to more cleaning needed because of covid and the summer camp at the Old Town Hall. R. Stern asked about the Historic Preservation line with \$20,000 in it. M. Roy said that had all been spent on the Old Parsonage improvements. B. Arsenault asked about the Fire Station maintenance line. S. Paquin said that he had budgeted \$6,000 for an architectural study of the building. B. Arsenault asked if there was going to be a Capital Improvement Plan for the Fire Station. S. Paquin said that he wants to get the study done first.

S. Paquin said that there are plans to paint and fix the water damage spots on the ceiling in Town Hall and to get cameras in the auditorium and deRochement Room to record meetings. There will also be a camera in the Town Hall lobby, this was a recommendation made during the Town Clerk audit by the State.

M. Roy remembered that the Town Buildings budget had been cut by the Budget Committee last year. B. Arsenault made the motion. That is the reason for the decrease in 2021.

E. Savinelli asked about the plans for the Stone School. S. Paquin said that he and P. Moynihan had met with the HDC about it. Nothing will happen until he is given a plan for the improvements.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Town Buildings budget. All were in favor.

Code Enforcement Budget Review:

R. Stern moved to tentatively approve the Code Enforcement budget of \$154,676. C. Wayss seconded the motion.

J. Kent Weiner asked about the training expense line. S. Paquin said that he hasn't been to a meeting in two years. The ICC conference is a five-day intense training by the people that write the building codes. C. Wayss asked about the vehicle expense line, only \$337 was spent in 2021, but \$2,000 is budgeted for 2022. M. Roy said it was because of the age of the vehicle. S. Paquin said that the car currently needs \$4,000 of repairs. R. Stern asked what the revenue is for the Code Enforcement office. M. Roy said that building permits were \$149,000, sign permits were \$18,200, electrical permits were \$34,000 and plumbing permits were \$29,899. B. Arsenault asked if the Town still has a plumbing and electrical inspector. S. Paquin said he will keep them in 2022 and then will look at it again for the 2023 budget. S. Paquin is a certified plumbing and electrical inspector for both residential and commercial. B. Arsenault thought that five days of training was a lot for the first year of employment. S. Paquin said that his department is the only one that evolves every day with new techniques and materials. He is required to get a certain number of hours of training each year, this conference will qualify as 80% of the hours needed.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Code Enforcement budget. All were in favor.

Land Management Budget Review:

R. Stern moved to tentatively approve the Land Management budget of \$62,643. A. Wilson seconded the motion.

M. Roy said that the Portable Rest Rooms line has increased due to increased costs despite reducing the number of them in Town. The gate needed to be repaired in 2021 and there was a drainage problem at Fox Point that needed to be fixed. C. Wayss about getting a better gate so there would be fewer repairs. M. Roy said that it would cost \$20,000 to get a new gate. B. Blonigen said that most of the repairs are needed because drivers crash into the gate. Discussion ensued about the need for a gate at that location. The gate is there because of an agreement with the PDA. M. Roy thinks it is a good idea because it reduces traffic cutting through Town.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Land Management budget. All were in favor.

Executive Office Budget Review:

E. Savinelli moved to tentatively approve the Executive Office budget of \$323,666. A. Wilson seconded the motion.

The 2022 budget is \$1,020 more than 2021.

J. Kent Weiner asked about the five part time employee hours. M. Roy said her hours were 32 per week, Finance Director 30 hours, Admin Assts (two people) 44 hours and P. Deshaine 12 hours. J. Kent Weiner asked about the Actuarial expense line. M. Roy said that this is a Federal Government requirement. A full review is done every three years, Newington's will be done in 2022. An annual review is done the other years. C. Wayss asked about the AP/Payroll expense line overspent in 2021. M. Roy said that purchase orders are ordered for all departments, paychecks etc. C. Wayss asked how many paper checks are issued. S. Bagley said under 10 per payroll. B. Arsenault asked about the advertising line being overspent. M. Roy said that they had to advertise for the Finance Director and Building Inspector, plus sales of town equipment (cars etc.) and all public notices.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Executive Office budget. All were in favor.

Finance/Assessing Budget Review:

R. Stern moved to tentatively approve the Finance/Assessing budget of \$137,236. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

M. Roy said that assessing costs increased due to a software update and an assessing statistical update will be done in 2022.

The Town moved the trust funds to Three Bearings. They offered an interest rate of 5% instead of .5% offered by TD Bank. The \$10,000 in the Trust Management Fee expense line is the yearly charge for Three Bearings services. S. Bagley said that the new company offers administrative help for the trustees that TD Bank didn't offer anymore. B. Arsenault asked how much money is in the capital reserve accounts. M. Roy said over 2 million. E. Savinelli asked if the Town had looked at any other firms. T. Connors said that the Trustees of the Trust Funds had looked into several options and came to the Board of Selectmen for their opinion. E. Savinelli asked if there was an account at the bank that would pay 5%. T. Connors said no. J. Kent Weiner asked if it was a multiyear contract. M. Roy said that Jennifer Mulstay, the Chair of the Trustees of the Trust Fund, will be at the public hearing to answer any questions.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Finance/Assessing budget. All were in favor.

Legal Budget Review:

B. Arsenault moved to tentatively approve the Legal budget of \$80,000. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

E. Savinelli pointed out the Town had spent \$93,000 on legal fees in 2021. Will \$80,000 be enough in 2022. M. Roy said that the Town had wrapped up the assessment lawsuits in 2021, so legal fees should be lower in 2022.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Legal budget. All were in favor.

Transfer Station Budget Review:

B. Arsenault moved to tentatively approve the Transfer Station budget of \$86,076. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

B. Arsenault asked if wages went up because of an additional employee.
B. Blonigen said that wages have increased across the board.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Transfer Station budget. All were in favor.

Residential Waste Budget Review:

R. Stern moved to tentatively approve the Residential Waste budget of \$93,368. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

The Town has a contract with Len Thomas for residential waste collection.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Residential Waste budget. All were in favor.

Insurance Budget Review:

C. Wayss moved to tentatively approve the Insurance budget of \$286,158. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

The Town got a refund in 2021 because claims were low in 2020 due to Covid 19.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Insurance budget. All were in favor.

Regional Association Budget Review:

C. Wayss moved to tentatively approve the Regional Association budget of \$39,610. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

The Town reduced requested amounts by 10%. B. Arsenault asked if the associations ask for specific amounts. M. Roy said that each organization sends in a request. They let the town know how many residents used their services during the year. J. Lamson said that Meals on Wheels didn't ask for anything this year because they didn't serve anyone in Newington in 2021. T. Connors pointed out that most of the \$40,000 budget was for COAST.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Regional Associations budget. All were in favor.

Street Lighting Budget Review:

E. Savinelli moved to tentatively approve the Street Lighting budget of \$14,060. C. Wayss seconded the motion.

The 2022 budget is 15% less than the 2021 budget.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Street Lighting budget. All were in favor.

Pest Control Budget Review:

C. Wayss moved to tentatively approve the Pest Control budget of \$30,725. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

E. Savinelli said that she had asked for an organic alternative for pest control and thought that asking the current vendor was not a good idea.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Pest Control budget. E. Savinelli and C. Wayss opposed. All others were in favor.

Health Budget Review:

C. Wayss moved to tentatively approve the Health Budget of \$1. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

No Discussion.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Health Budget. All were in favor.

Welfare Budget Review:

E. Savinelli moved to tentatively approve the Welfare budget of \$1,000. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

This budget was reduced because people are back to work and there isn't as much help needed.

J. Lamson called for a vote on the Welfare budget. All were in favor.

Old Business:

Fire Department request to add \$1 for the Vacation Buy Out expense line. New budget total of \$1,884,791.

E. Savinelli moved to add \$1 to the Fire Department Vacation Buy Out expense line for a total budget of \$1,884,791. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Historic District Commission request to add \$2,000 to the CLG Grant Expense Line. New budget total of \$18,568.

This money will only be spent if the commission gets the grant.

B. Arsenault moved to add \$2,000 to the Historic District Commission's CLG Grant Expense Line. New budget total of \$18,568. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. All were in favor.

E. Savinelli moved to adjourn at 8:45pm. C. Wayss seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,

**Eleanor Boy
Recorder**