

Town of Newington, NH  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 16, 2020 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, Sandy Sweeney, Jennifer Kent Weiner, Alan Wilson, Jamie Belanger, John Chamberlain, Ted Connors-Selectmen's Rep, Peggy Lamson, Cemetery Trustee, Cosmas Iocovozzi, Cemetery Trustee, Jeff Hiatt, Chair Economic Development Committee, Mike Donahue, Vice Chair Economic Development Committee, Laura Stone, Co-Chair Recreation Committee, Mike Marconi, Selectman, Ken Latchaw, Selectman, Brenda Blonigen, Chair Police Commission, Derrick Willson, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

**Minutes Approval:**

J. Kent Weiner asked that the minutes be amended to change the sentence that says that Fire Chief E. Hoyt recommends a second floor on the Fire Station. It should read that the assessment recommended that a second floor be added to the Fire Station. **A. Wilson moved to approve the minutes of December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 as amended. W. Wright seconded the motion.**

**Cemetery Budget Review:**

P. Lamson and C. Iocovozzi presented the Cemetery budget to the committee.

The 2021 budget is less than the 2020 budget. The decrease is due to the sexton position not being filled in 2021. P. Lamson thanked the volunteers that have helped in the cemetery. Paul and Bob Spinney, Chase Coleman and the Police Department helped putting flags on the headstones. The Cemetery Trustees are so grateful to have such wonderful volunteers that help them take care of the cemetery and help keep costs down.

**J. Kent Weiner moved to approve the Cemetery budget of \$19,595. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.**

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote on the Cemetery budget. J. Lamson-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, W. Wright-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, S. Sweeney-abstain, J. Belanger-yes, T. Connors-yes. All in favor.**

T. Connors let the Budget Committee know that the Board of Selectmen have received a notice from the town's attorneys that the State dropped the assessed value of EP Newington by \$117 million.

### **Economic Development Committee Budget Review:**

**W. Wright moved to tentatively approve the Economic Development Committee budget of \$19,643. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.**

Chief Jeff Hiatt presented the Economic Development Committee budget to the committee.

The 2021 budget is 5% less than the 2020 budget.

J. Hiatt explained that the committee is tasked with maintaining the current businesses and business tenants in Newington and attracting new businesses. It is important that the businesses have a good feeling toward Newington, the Town Hall and the various boards. The committee is looking to participate in NH magazine's ad program to promote business in NH. This program is in conjunction with five other towns in the area; Portsmouth, Rochester, Dover, Durham and Pease. 1 ad a year will feature Newington. J. Kent Weiner asked which expense line this money would be in. B. Arsenault stated it would come from the dues and memberships line.

Current business happenings in town are:

- Wilcox Industries is doing a \$1.1 million expansion
- Subcom is doing a \$3.4 million expansion
- The new Subaru dealership will be \$2.7 million in value
- Newington Falls Medical will be \$3.4 million in value
- Dick's Sporting Goods is doing a \$688,000 renovation
- Georgia Pacific is doing a \$500,000 renovation

These new businesses and renovations are important to get back the tax base that the Town is losing with the utilities and retail.

J. Hiatt explained that Erol Moe from Stoneface Brewing, contacted him after reading an article in the town newsletter. Stoneface wants to expand, but is

looking at other towns. It is important to have an Economic Development Committee to respond to businesses when they are considering leaving town.

E. Savinelli asked about the town's sewer rates. Are they an issue with businesses? J. Hiatt confirmed that it is a big negative for businesses. M. Donahue explained that the Economic Development Committee met with the Sewer Commission and they explained that the EPA mandated upgrade caused the increase. Newington was hoping that when Portsmouth upgraded their sewer plant their rates would go up also, but they didn't increase as much as Newington's rates. The rates are tied to the number of users of the sewer. Newington has a lot fewer users than Portsmouth so the increase didn't affect their rates as much.

J. Belanger asked what Newington's branding was to businesses and what zoning changes is the committee looking at. J. Hiatt explained that the Economic Development Committee has nothing to do with zoning. They are planning on meeting with the Planning and Zoning boards to share ideas. The branding is that Newington is business friendly and have dedicated areas in town for businesses. J. Belanger didn't think Newington is business friendly if the sewer rates are high and taxes are going up. B. Arsenault added that the sewer rates were the only detriment to Newington. There are many positives. J. Hiatt said that the remedy to lower the sewer rates is to get more users.

J. Kent Weiner asked about the rolls of the EDC coordinator and the EDC consultant. K. Anderson explained that as the coordinator she sets up activities, updates the website, updates the list of properties for sale or lease, organizes the building permits for the committee, developed a business newsletter to be distributed quarterly, promotes local businesses, retention of current businesses, whatever the EDC asked her to do. She works 10 hours a week. Jerry Coogan is the consultant. J. Kent Weiner asked why the committee would need a planner? M. Donahue explained that J. Coogan has a lot of experience working with the local businesses. He doesn't do any planning work as the consultant. J. Coogan is the liaison for the State of NH and other EDC in other towns. J. Kent Weiner thought that the pay for the consultant and coordinator was too high. B. Arsenault agreed. The EDC has more paid employees than any other committee in town. J. Kent Weiner thought that the consultant position should be cut for 2021. M. Donahue asked that if the consultant position is cut then some hours would be added for the coordinator.

W. Wright added that he is very impressed with what the EDC is doing and believes that the EDC is the most important committee in town considering what's going on with the utilities and retail's assessments.

J Hiatt added that the town hired a company to do a study of mixed use in Newington. The study concluded that the biggest opportunity would be to do development that mixes retail, experiential, concert venues, etc. The study was done pre-Covid.

**B. Arsenault moved to amend the Economic Development Committee budget to reduce the contracted services expense line by \$4,999 for a total budget of \$14,644. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson mentioned that both he and B. Arsenault are on the Economic Development Committee. E. Savinelli thought the committee could move money from the event expense line if K. Anderson needs more time each week. B. Arsenault asked J. Hiatt if they were going to have any events in 2021. J. Hiatt thought they would have an event in the Fall. J. Belanger is in favor of the amendment. He wants the EDC to be successful, just at a lower cost.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote on the amendment to reduce the contracted services expense line by \$4,999. J. Lamson-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, W. Wright-no, J. Kent Weiner-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, S. Sweeney-no, J. Belanger-yes, T. Connors-no. 7 members-yes and 3 members-no, the amendment carries.**

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote on the amended Economic Development Committee budget of \$14,644. J. Lamson-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, W. Wright-no, J. Kent Weiner-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Chamberlain-no, E. Savinelli-yes, S. Sweeney-no, J. Belanger-yes, T. Connors-no. 6 members-yes and 4 members-no, the budget carries.**

#### **Recreation Committee Budget Review:**

**E. Savinelli moved to tentatively approve the Recreation Committee budget of \$51,850. B. Arsenault seconded the motion.**

Co-Chair Laura Stone presented the budget to the committee.

The 2021 budget is the same as the 2020 budget.

There may be a warrant article for the tennis court repairs.

J. Lamson commented that it is nice to have a Recreation Committee during these times.

L. Stone said that she had met with the YMCA about the summer camp in 2021. Plans are to have the camp if everything goes as planned. The Recreation Committee did a survey of parents and found there was widespread support for the camp next summer with no Friday field trips. J. Kent Weiner thought that the mental health of the kids is so important at this time.

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote on the Recreation budget. J. Lamson-yes, B. Arsenault-yes, W. Wright-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, S. Sweeney-yes, J. Belanger-yes, T. Connors-yes. All in favor.**

The next Budget Committee meeting is Wednesday January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:30pm.

E. Savinelli asked if the committee could meet earlier. J. Lamson said that when the Police budget is added to an agenda the time should be moved up.

**W. Wright moved to adjourn at 7:40pm. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.**

**J. Lamson called for a roll call vote. J. Lamson-yes, W. Wright-yes, J. Kent Weiner-yes, A. Wilson-yes, J. Chamberlain-yes, E. Savinelli-yes, S. Sweeney-yes, J. Belanger-yes, T. Connors-yes. All in favor.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Eleanor Boy  
Recorder**