

Town of Newington, NH  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 6, 2023 Town Hall

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

**Present:** Budget Committee members: John Lamson, Chair, Emily Savinelli, Vice-Chair; Jeff Semprini, Jennifer Kent Weiner, Cyndi Lyons, Maggie Cooke, Selectman's Rep. Chris Wayss, Alan Wilson, Jamie Belanger, Cemetery Trustee Cos Iocovozzi, Cemetery Trustee Peggy Lamson, School Board Rep Jeremy Boston, EDC Member Brian Semprini, Recreation Committee Chair Rebecca Navelski, Recreation Committee Member Jessica Morgan, Recreation Committee Member Bill Wright, Conservation Commission Chair Jane Hislop, Board of Fire Engineer Ann Hyland Hebert, Finance Director Sheryl Bagley and Martha Roy, Town Administrator.

Chair John Lamson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and welcomed new Budget Committee member Cyndi Lyons and thanked her for volunteering.

**Minutes:** A. Wilson moved to approve the minutes of October 11, 2023. J. Boston seconded the motion. C. Wayss, J. Belanger and M. Cooke abstained. All others were in favor.

J. Lamson wanted to clarify at the last meeting he said that the ambulance revenue source was the Town's largest revenue stream and that was incorrect. The Town Clerk vehicle registration is the biggest revenue stream for the Town. Building permits are also a large source of revenue.

**Cemetery Budget Review:**

Alan Wilson said that the 2023 Cemetery budget shows an over expenditure of \$50 on the mowing line. This was due to the clean-up of the Westinghouse Cemetery. The water "turn off and turn on" expenses increased. Mowing will increase in 2024. The Trustees will be spending \$57,200, the bid from Bourassa, for paving in the cemetery in 2024. This money will come out of the Cemetery Trust Fund maintenance fund.

J. Lamson said that the 2024 Cemetery budget is \$77,361, but \$57,200 of that total will be taken out of the Cemetery Trust Fund and won't be raised by taxes.

**E. Savinelli moved to tentatively approve the Cemetery budget of \$77,361. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.**

J. Kent Weiner asked which cemetery roads would be paved in 2024. A. Wilson said just the oldest ones. Just the “humpy” ones and the ones that they had to dig up to put in the irrigation.

Alan Wilson said that the trust fund for improvements has a balance of \$27,196 for the principle and the anticipated interest for 2023 is \$1,412. The cemetery maintenance trust fund has a principal balance of \$120,619 and anticipated 2023 interest is \$17,597. The perpetual care fund has a principal balance of \$51,549 with anticipated interest of \$2,390. Another small trust fund has \$2,928. There are many (66) small cemetery trust funds and only the interest can be used for maintenance from these.

Discussion ensued about the different cemeteries around Newington and the maintenance of them.

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

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

**J. Belanger moved to tentatively approve the EDC budget of \$6,831. J. Boston seconded the motion.**

C. Wayss explained that the EDC hasn’t had a high amount of participation. The first proposal was to zero out their budget and give them a year to rebuild. However, after more discussion among the Selectmen it was decided to cut their budget by 50% to leave them money to do some work.

B. Semprini said that the goal of the EDC is to recruit and retain businesses in Town. Retaining some money in the budget will allow the committee to try to do some work.

J. Kent Weiner asked about the website being worked on. B. Semprini said that that project is in the top of the list.

B. Semprini thought it was important to keep this committee going. J. Belanger said the committee has a challenge of determining which businesses are better for the town. J. Lamson said that a Chamber of Commerce would usually do some of this work, but Newington doesn’t have a chamber of commerce so it falls on the EDC.

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

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

**J. Belanger moved to tentatively approve the Recreation Committee budget of \$63,086. J. Boston seconded the motion.**

**J. Lamson asked for an explanation as to why the 2023 Recreation and the 2024 budget were so different.**

J. Morgan said that the Summer Camp budget was \$90,000 in 2023 because the Town had to front all the summer camp tuition to the YMCA. \$90,000 was for 50 kids for nine weeks. In 2024 they have figured out a different way to do summer camp, families will not have to sign up for all nine weeks, they can pick and choose their weeks, the YMCA will do all the administration with no money going through the Town, nonresidents will also be able to sign up for Newington summer camp after Newington residents sign up. The \$10,000 in the budget will be used for supplies and anyone who needs aid in paying for camp. C. Wayss commended the Recreation Committee for all their hard work in finding a different way to do summer camp in Newington. R. Navelski said that some town employees have said that they would send their kids to the Newington camp if separate weeks were offered. The tuition is \$228 per week for Newington residents and \$285 for non-residents. The rate includes field trips.

R. Navelski said that the Selectmen have approved the contract and will be signing it soon. J. Belanger commended the work of the Recreation Committee and it should not be underestimated. The committee should be proud of what they have come up with.

J. Lamson said that Es Medeiros, the Recreation Director, has done a wonderful job. R. Navelski said that they have increased her hours for 2024.

J. Morgan said that she would like their budget to be separated into revenue generating expense lines and non-revenue generating lines. J. Lamosn thought it was a good idea because if the Recreation Committee is asking for an increase in their budget, it would be nice to know that the increases will be generating revenue.

J. Kent Weiner asked about the director's additional hours in 2024. Even though she has participated and enjoyed some of the recreation's activities these are not considered essential services and there was an increase in the tax rate this year. J. Kent Weiner would like to see the 2023 budgeted amount for the Recreation director brought forward to the 2024 budget because of the situation the Town is in right now.

J. Belanger said that he would question the use of the word essential. He thought these activities are essential to bring the residents together and communicate. Summer camp is essential for the working parents. J. Kent Weiner said she was only talking about the recreation director's hours being increased in 2024.

M. Cooke questioned how many hours for the Recreation Director was voted in at Town Meeting. M. Cooke thought it was only for 10 hours a week. C. Wayss said the original warrant article was for the hours they estimated, but Rec has increased as more projects have been identified.

**J. Kent Weiner moved to reduce the recreation committee's wages line from \$24,000 to \$20,000. M. Cooke seconded the motion.**

E. Savinelli said that she recognized what J. Kent Weiner is saying she thinks that the Town should hang on to someone who is doing a great job in their position. Especially since it is so hard to fill positions in town.

B. Wright said that he thinks having a Recreation director has really worked out well. Recreation has had events every week of the year. They have more adult programs and adding revenue generating activities.

J. Kent Weiner said she is only asking for level funding and sees the value of all the new activities.

J. Morgan said that she feels that the Recreation Committee has cut their budget a lot. The activities are a lot and the director is a life saver for the committee members.

J. Boston said that it is commendable that the Recreation Committee has made cuts in their budget but have increased activities for the residents.

J. Belanger said there was a lot of stress on the recreation members before there was a Rec director and he is not in favor of putting more stress on the committee. We want more people to volunteer.

C. Wayss what the total cost for the camp for the town in 2023 was \$40,000, which \$28,244 was paid for by residents. The cost to taxpayers was \$12,000.

**J. Lamson called for a vote on the amendment to reduce the wages line from \$24,000 to \$20,000. J. Kent Weiner, C. Wayss and M. Cooke were in favor. All others were opposed.**

**J. Lamson called for a vote on the Recreation Committee budget. All were in favor.**

#### **Conservation Commission Budget Review:**

J. Hislop has moved some money around in the budget, but the bottom line remains the same.

The wages line increased to \$3,300, the community education line was reduced to \$500. They will be having three events in 2024.

J. Kent Weiner asked about the rationale for increasing the wages line for the conservation's secretary. J. Hislop said that the secretary has been underused in the past. J. Kent Weiner questioned why the wages line had to be increased to \$3,300 in 2024, when only \$756 was used so far in 2023. J. Hislop said it was more of a concern of not using the secretary as the committee should.

**J. Belanger moved to tentatively approve the Conservation Commission budget of \$9,342, with the wages line increased by \$500 and the Community Education line reduced by \$500. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.**

**J. Lamson called for a vote on the Conservation Commission budget. All were in favor.**

C. Wayss said that the town has some shoreline erosion happening that will potentially take up some additional resources from the Conservation Commission.

The Fox Point waterline project will also involve the Conservation Commission. A shoreline expert and landscaping experts to make a restoration plan and believes their budget will be expended in 2024.

Discussion ensued about the erosion on Fox Point and the devaluation of the power plants because of their idle time being more than their peak times and the competition from Massachusetts natural gas plants.

**Adjournment: E. Savinelli moved to adjourn at 7:21pm. J. Boston seconded the motion with all in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Boy  
Recording Secretary