

Town of Newington, NH
Budget Committee Public Hearing Minutes
Wednesday, February 5, 2020 Town Hall

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

Present: John Lamson, Chair, Alan Wilson, Vice-Chair, William Wright, Brandon Arsenault, Jamie Belanger, John Chamberlain, Emily Savinelli, Jennifer Kent Weiner, School Board Rep, Jack O'Reilly, Selectmen's Rep, Ken Latchaw

Absent: Sandra Sweeney

Guests: Salvatore Petralia, SAU 50 Superintendent of Schools, Mindy Ryan-SAU 50 Business Administrator, Ted Connors-Board of Selectmen Chair, Mike Marconi-Selectman, Cindy Saklad-Finance Director, Denis Hebert-Planning Board Chair, Mike Bilodeau-Police Chief, EJ Hoyt-Fire Chief, Patrick Moynihan-Assistant Fire Chief, Peter Latchaw-Newington School Principal, Lara Croft-Library Director, Lillian Wilson-Library Trustee, Lee Lamson-Library Alternate Trustee, Jack Hoyt-Police Commissioner, Brenda Blonigan-Police Commissioner, John Klanchesser-Board of Fire Engineer Chair, Ann Hyland Hebert- Fire Engineer, Jim Fabrizio-Fire Engineer, Denis Messier - Sewer Plant Manager, Skip Cole- Sewer Commissioner, Rick Stern-Sewer Commissioner, Martha Roy-Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder. Other residents and employees were present.

Minutes Review: K. Latchaw moved to approve the minutes of January 22nd, 2020 as amended. J. O'Reilly seconded the motion, with J. Belanger and J. Kent Weiner abstaining and all others in favor.

School Budget Review:

Salvatore Petralia reviewed the School Operating Budget for the Newington School District. Enrollment is projected to go up to 60 students in the next couple of years. A 7.1% increase in health costs plus contract obligations have increased the budget for the 2020-2021 school year. Newington pays \$18,000 per student to attend Portsmouth High School, \$18,811 per student to attend Portsmouth Middle School and the cost per student for the Newington school is approximately \$24,000.

Article 1: Proposed Operating Budget. K. Latchaw moved to recommend Article 1 in the amount of \$2,259,131. A. Wilson seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

Article 2: Building and Grounds Expendable Trust Fund: K. Latchaw moved to recommend Article 2 in the amount of \$20,000. J. Belanger seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.

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

J. Lamson told the committee that he was going to start the public hearing with the warrant articles and start with article#2 and do article#1 last.

Article 2: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$132,000) to be added to the Major Road Work Capital Reserve Fund previously established. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 2.

C. Cross asked where the funds were coming from. M. Roy said that they were given to the town by Eversource for the lay down area. C. Cross asked if this money would be used for the extension of Shattuck Way. C. Cross thought that it would be an unnecessary expense because all the businesses in the area already have access down there. R. Stern thought that the \$132,000 should be put back into the general fund to lower taxes. D. Hebert thought that the businesses who will eventually build in the area will pay for the road to be extended, the town shouldn't waste the money. D. Hebert thought that it was a good idea to extend the road when it was put in the master plan 20 years ago but doesn't think it is a good idea now. Jessica Morgan asked what would happen to the money if the warrant article was rejected. M. Roy said it would go back into the general fund. J. Lamson thought it would be a good idea for the Board of Selectmen to have a public meeting about the roads and the Eversource payments. T. Connors said the Selectmen would have a public meeting about any expansion of Shattuck Way. A. Hebert spoke against the warrant article. P. Lamson spoke in favor of the warrant article. K. Latchaw pointed out that the town needs to put money in the warrant article because Newington is responsible for half the cost of paving Gosling Road in 2020 and Shattuck Way is in need of work too. M. Roy said that there is \$346,782 in the capital reserve account now. The town will be paying the state \$284,000 for Woodbury Ave. work in 2020 as soon as their "punch list" of projects is completed. That will leave \$62,000 in the account. D. Hebert asked for a clarification on what the money would be used for. He would be in favor of the warrant article if the money was going to be used for the upkeep of roads and not the extension of Shattuck Way. B. Arsenault read the minutes from the January 15th Budget Committee minutes that said that this money would be used to build out the Industrial Corridor to Gosling Road. This road would help with the traffic on Woodbury Ave. and it would give access to more private development in this area. B. Arsenault said that the committee was getting brand new information tonight about using the money for Woodbury, Shattuck and Gosling. J. O'Reilly reminded everyone that Eversource is going to restore all town roads to their original condition before the project started. J. O'Reilly thought that \$66,000 should be put into the capital reserve and \$66,000 should be returned to the

taxpayers. E. Savinelli pointed out that last year the Selectmen told the public that they were going to have public meetings about the roads and there weren't any. Residents are very concerned about the roads. E. Savinelli asked for clarification on what funds from Eversource are proposed for the warrant article. M. Roy stated that the \$132,000 received by the town in 2019 for the laydown area rental, from Eversource, are the funds being proposed to be used in this warrant article.

K. Latchaw moved to recommend Article 2 in the amount of \$132,000. A. Wilson seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. W. Wright, K. Latchaw, A. Wilson and J. Lamson were in favor and J. Chamberlain, J. Kent Weiner, J. O'Reilly, J. Belanger, E. Savinelli and B. Arsenault were opposed. The Budget Committee does not recommend Article#2, 6-4.

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000) for the purpose of building a Fire Station addition.

K. Latchaw explained that the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Fire Engineers met on January 29th, 2020 and all agreed to recommend the Fire Station addition. This addition would be a 15x30 room that would store and wash the fire gear.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 2. There were none.

J. O'Reilly moved to recommend Article 3 in the amount of \$125,000. B. Arsenault seconded the motion.

J. O'Reilly said that this addition is a health/safety issue for the firefighters. B. Arsenault asked what other upgrades does this \$125,000 include. Fire Chief E. Hoyt said the \$125,00 is for the negative pressure room, upgrading 3 bathrooms to be ADA compliant, deal with the asbestos and add a fourth bunk room. B. Arsenault asked if the roof would be included. E. Hoyt said the architect had reported that the roof still had life in it. **J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).**

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) to be placed in the Replacement of Vehicles Operated by the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 4. There were none.

J. O'Reilly moved to recommend Article 4 in the amount of \$100,000. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Belanger asked if the Fire Department could buy their pickup trucks out of this fund. Fire Chief Hoyt said that it was not their intention. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and 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

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 5. There were none.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 5 in the amount of \$50,000. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 6: To see if the town will vote to establish a Fire Department Vehicle Major Repair Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for completing major vehicle repairs and to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand (\$25,000) to be placed in this fund. Further to name to Board of Selectmen as agents to expend from said fund.

This is a new capital reserve fund to separate the replacement and the repair of Fire vehicles. There is no balance in the fund because it is brand new. D. Hebert was happy that the funds are going to be separate going forward. The warrant article to separate the two funds will be on the warrant for the town meeting.

J. Kent Weiner moved to recommend Article 6 in the amount of \$25,000. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 7: J Lamson tabled this article until after Article #8.

Article 8: On a petition of resident David Turbide of 36 Hodgdon Farm Lane 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 Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$80,000) for the purpose of expanding the current Langdon Library parking lot with the Library Trustees as agents to expend.

Library Trustee Peter Welch spoke in favor of the warrant article. He explained that there is a need for more parking at the Library 100 times a year. The Library has to move programs around because there is no place to park. P. Welch handed out sketches of the proposed parking lot. The new parking lot will hold 10 new spaces. J. O'Reilly pointed out that in the 2015 Library minutes it says that the trustees wanted to complete the parking lot along with the addition but ran out of money. The Board of Selectmen said that they would help but couldn't give the Library the amount of money that was promised. The Library Trustees decided to wait until after the bond had been paid off to pursue the parking lot. The Library Trustees went to the HDC about their need for a parking lot, but nothing ever happened. The engineering costs have already been paid for by the Library. It is time to move forward with the project. A. Hebert spoke in favor of the warrant article. No more money should be spent on studies. The current parking lot doesn't match the potential use of the building. The Library is getting used more and more. This parking lot will double the number of spaces there and can be expanded to other areas in the future. Library Director Lara Berry spoke in

favor of the warrant article. L. Berry said that the library usage has increased every year she has been there and sees increases continuing in the future.

J. Lamson tabled the discussion on Article #8 and opened the public comments on Article #7.

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the Langdon Library Building Capital Reserve Fund.

K. Latchaw doesn't question the need for more parking at the library, he just questions the location of the proposed parking lot. The best solution for parking in the Historic District is a parking lot on the right side of the Library. Article #7 is for \$10,000 to put towards a future parking lot. C. Cross explained that 15 years ago there was a proposal for a parking lot in the Historic District. It could be a series of "pocket" parking lots. The HDC had a meeting about the parking lot, but nothing was ever done. P. Welch did not think that the right side of the library was a good spot for a parking lot because it would impact the walkway, the lights, the cable service and the granite structure that is located there.

Article 8 Continued.

Budget Committee discussion. B. Arsenault thought that it was poor budgeting to the entire amount for the parking lot done in one year. K. Latchaw commented that they had looked at the right-side location for the parking lot and it was possible. E. Savinelli asked if the town had asked Altus Engineering to look at the right-side location for the parking lot. B. Arsenault asked if Altus had given the town an official opinion. K. Latchaw said that Altus had not given the town an opinion. E. Savinelli pointed out that the library had given the town a good plan that addressed many issues including the drainage problem. No more studies, this needs to get done. J. O'Reilly said that this parking lot will improve handicap access to the library and this parking lot is expandable all the way to the stone wall.

J. Kent Weiner moved to recommend Article 8 in the amount of \$80,000. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. K. Latchaw opposed with all others in favor (9-1).

J. Lamson called for a vote on Article 7.

E. Savinelli moved to recommend Article 7 in the amount of \$10,000. A. Wilson seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All in favor (10-0).

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) to be placed in the existing Conservation Fund established in accordance with RSA 36-A:5 to be used for expenses associated with

the purchase of Conservation Land and open space, easements, wetlands and other land management acquisitions.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 9.
D. Hebert spoke in favor of the article.

J. Kent Weiner moved to recommend Article 9 in the amount of \$20,000. J. O'Reilly seconded the motion.

There is currently no land that is being considered for conservation. B. Arsenault thought the lower amount was ok because there was nothing planned. J. Belanger thought that more money should be put in the account in case any land becomes available for conservation.

J. Lamson called for a vote. B. Arsenault abstained with all others in favor (9-0-1).

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) to be placed in the Severance to Town Employees Expendable Trust Fund.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 10. There were none.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 10 in the amount of \$30,000. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 11: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Eight Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$28,250) for the purpose of purchasing a Fire Boat. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Fire Chief Hoyt explained that the Fire Department saved this money from their 2019 budget for the boat. J. Lamson explained that the boat was supposed to be a donation, but all of the donations didn't come in as planned so this amount is the remaining balance due on the boat. T. Connors said that the boat purchase was put on a warrant article for the town to approve the boat purchase.

Alan Wilson moved to recommend Article 11 in the amount of \$28,250. K. Latchaw seconded the motion. E. Savinelli asked if there were procedures in place to prevent this from happening again. T. Connors said that before solicitation of a donation is started everyone will be notified and the process/plan will be discussed. B. Arsenault asked if anyone had approached the remaining donor. E. Hoyt said that the boat was supposed to be purchased with 100% donations, but one donor fell through. This is the remaining balance.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 12: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be added to the Replacement of Vehicles and Equipment operated by the Highway Department Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 12. There were none.

B. Arsenault moved to recommend Article 12 in the amount of \$25,000. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 13: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be placed in the Town Wide Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 13. There were none.

K. Latchaw moved to recommend Article 13 in the amount of \$25,000. J. O'Reilly seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 14: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) for the purpose of Historic District Building Renovation in accordance with the NH SEC Ruling of January 31, 2019. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance.

D. Hebert asked if these funds could be used to seal the bricks at the Library. M. Roy said that the money must be used for Historic District Building renovation and that the State Office of Historic Preservation must agree to the project. R. Stern asked if this was a capital reserve fund. M. Roy said it was not. E. Savinelli asked if it is a one-time payment. M. Roy said it was.

J. O'Reilly moved to recommend Article 14 in the amount of \$20,000. E. Savinelli seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 15: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the Town Recreation Facilities and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

Jessica Morgan spoke in favor of the warrant article. The Recreation Committee wants to replace the playground equipment at the Old Town Hall. The surface area underneath the play area needs to be replaced. It does not meet the safety requirements for playgrounds. J. Kent Weiner asked how much a new system and surface area would cost. J. Morgan said around \$18,000. B. Arsenault pointed out that there was

over \$37,000 in the capital reserve fund. J. Morgan said that those funds are for the repair of the tennis court.

K. Latchaw moved to recommend Article 15 in the amount of \$10,000. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 16: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the Town Generators Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 16. There were none.

J. O'Reilly moved to recommend Article 16 in the amount of \$10,000. K. Latchaw seconded the motion. J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 17: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the Fire Department Communications Capital Reserve Fund.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 17. There were none.

K. Latchaw moved to recommend Article 17 in the amount of \$10,000. B. Arsenault seconded the motion.

Fire Chief Hoyt said that this money will be used in the future to replace aging portable radios.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

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.

J. Lamson asked for public questions or comments on Article 18. There were none.

K. Latchaw moved to recommend Article 18 in the amount of \$5,000. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

Article 19: To see if the town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund to be known as the Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of construction and/or other improvements to the Cemetery, including but not limited to, retrofitting the old receiving tomb in the Town Cemetery to construct a columbarium for above ground entombment of cremation remains, and to raise and

appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000) with the Cemetery Trustees as agents to expend.

Cemetery Trustee Alan Wilson spoke in favor of the warrant article. This is a new fund. The total cost of a columbarium is \$8,000 for 24 units.

K. Latchaw moved to recommend Article 19 in the amount of \$4,000. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

J. Lamson called for a 2-minute break before discussion of article 1.

Article 1: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee recommended sum of Eight Million, One Hundred Thirty-Two Thousand, Nine Hundred and Twenty-Nine Dollars (\$8,132,929) for the operating budget. This article does not include appropriations voted in special or individual warrant articles addressed separately.

M. Roy highlighted some points in the 2020 budget.

The Finance/ Assessing budget is lower due to the revaluation being completed in 2019. The Planning Department is going to complete a CIP in 2020. Town buildings are being converted to LED in 2020. The Police and Fire Departments budgets have increased due to the 1.6% COLA and step increases, plus a .1% increase in health insurance expenses. The Highway budget has increased due to the acquisition of Woodbury Ave. The State balances its budget by giving Towns the responsibility of roads instead of the State.

J. O'Reilly moved to recommend Article 1 in the amount of \$8,132,929. E. Savinelli seconded the motion.

E. Savinelli asked if the Town had taken over Woodbury Ave. yet. M. Roy said the Town will officially take it over in the Spring or Summer after the State completes an outstanding "punch list" and the Town pays the State \$284,000. E. Savinelli asked why the town was contracting out the plowing of Woodbury this winter season. L. Thomas explained that the Highway Department wanted to contract out the plowing the first year and then evaluate after the season is completed. E. Savinelli thought that the town bought a new truck to plow Woodbury. T. Connors said that the town bought a new truck to replace the Highway Department's 1997 truck. Discussion ensued about blood testing, water testing, invasive species treatments and tree replacement.

J. Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor (10-0).

K. Latchaw moved to adjourn at 9:04pm. E. Savinelli seconded the motion with all in favor.

**Respectfully submitted,
Eleanor Boy, Recorder**