

Town of Newington, NH
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 2, 2019 Town Hall

Chair John Lamson called the meeting to order at 7:02pm

Present: Budget Committee members: John Lamson, Chair; Jamie Belanger, Alan Wilson, Emily Savinelli, John Chamberlain, School Board rep. Jack O'Reilly, Selectman's Rep. Ken Latchaw, SAU 50 Superintendent, Salvatore Petralia, SAU 50 Business Administrator, Mindy Ryan, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recording Secretary

Absent: Brandon Arsenault, Jennifer Kent Weiner and William Wright

Guests: Selectman, Mike Marconi, Selectman, Ted Connors, Peter Latchaw, Newington School Principal, EJ Hoyt, Interim Fire Chief and Mike Bilodeau, Police Chief and John Klanchesser, Board of Fire Engineers, Chair.

School Fiscal Year 2018/2019 Budget Review: M. Ryan reviewed the school year- end budget. She noted that there was a surplus of approximately \$144,000, \$60,000 will be used to add to the schools three capital reserve funds, \$20,000 each. There are 50 students enrolled this year. Of those 50 students 6 of them pay tuition. P. Latchaw thought that the number of tuition students would remain the same for next year. J. Belanger inquired about the capacity of the school. P. Latchaw explained that the School Board Chair, Mark Joyce and he put together a report this summer about the capacity of the Newington school. P. Latchaw stated that a lot depends on the ages of the children added to the school, but if the children were spread out evenly throughout the grades, then the capacity would be 65. If there was a large increase in students at the school, then the tuition program would be looked at. Newington children would get considered first for space at the school. P. Latchaw reviewed work that was done to the school building, HVAC work, grease trap rebuild and plumbing repairs. E. Savinelli asked if there were guarantees for this work. P. Latchaw said yes.

Town Budget through 9/30/19 Review:

J. Chamberlain asked why the Executive Office computer line was so high. M. Roy explained that there are many items charged to the line besides the 4 new computers for the Town Hall, including the service contract for the town computers, including Highway, Code Enforcement, Planning and Assessing, with RMON Networks. J. Belanger wanted to know why everyone wasn't on the

same servers. K. Latchaw stated that the Town had investigated getting Police, Fire and the Town Hall on one server and the cost was around \$40,000. J. Belanger inquired about using the "cloud" instead of a server. The cloud is not secure enough for all of the town's documents. J. Belanger thought that there should be a plan for combining the servers in the future to save money. This would be a good action item for the future. Put together a committee to look into this. E. Savinelli asked if the town receives a report form RMON explaining the service activity. M. Roy responded that she receives a weekly report. J. O'Reilly asked about the grant line with a large balance remaining. M. Roy explained that the Fire Department thought that they were going to get a grant for the new fire boat, but it didn't happen. E. Savinelli asked about the Town Clerk's software/computer overspent line. M. Roy explained that they are required to have a special program for the car registrations, and it was recently updated. J. Belanger asked if the town has looked a different electric supplier. M. Roy told the committee that Rockingham County bids out electricity for the county as a group and Newington is part of that bid. J. Belanger asked about the Town converting to solar power. T. Connors explained that the building inspector is studying the feasibility of solar for the town. E. Savinelli asked if the town could combine all the Comcast bills to get a better rate. M. Roy will look into this. A. Wilson wanted to know why the town uses Comcast and doesn't go with a phone company for their internet. M. Roy said that the Town used to get it's internet through a phone company, but was not satisfied and switched to Comcast. J. O'Reilly asked the Police Chief if his department was going to overspend its budget because of the amount of details worked in 2019. M. Bilodeau responded that he didn't think so. EJ Hoyt reviewed the Fire Department's 2019 budget with the committee. The detail line is overspent but has an offsetting revenue account. Training is overspent because of increased training under E. Hoyt's leadership. The department received a reduced gym membership from 24 Hour Fitness in Newington. New telephones were installed. The department receives a special rate for first responders. The new system is linked to google maps and allow the department to know layout of home and occupants before getting to the scene. The department now has an autopulse. This machine performs CPR on the patient while they are being carried out of the home by the firefighters. They no longer have to put the patient down to perform CPR. Discussion ensued about the amount of money taken out of the capital reserve fund for repairs instead of the purchase of new vehicles and separating the capital reserve funds so there is money left for the purchase of vehicles. One account for the purchase of vehicles and one account for repairs to vehicles. J. O'Reilly has submitted samples of new capital reserve accounts to the Selectmen. E. Hoyt reviewed several items that were purchased and repairs that were made that weren't budgeted, for a total of \$75,932. E. Hoyt believes that the department can absorb 2/3 of these expenditures, if a spending freeze is implemented for the rest of the year. The invoices are outstanding and

need to be paid. T. Connors explained that the Board of Selectmen have asked for a fiscal audit of the Fire Department and should have the results in 6 to 8 weeks. J. O'Reilly commended the Fire Department for keeping their overtime cost down in 2019. The culvert line in the Highway budget was discussed. M. Roy explained that Altus Engineering did a culvert study for the town and listed three culverts that needed to be repaired soon. The Board of Selectmen decided to do one repair in 2019 and budget the other 2 for 2020. J. O'Reilly asked about the Fox Point expense line in the Land Management budget. J. O'Reilly asked for a printout of all the items that have been paid out of the line for the past 3 years. J. Lamson would like the Police and Fire Departments to provide the budget committee with a pay chart for all employees and a vehicle chart for all department vehicles. J. O'Reilly asked if the Economic Development Committee is worth it's return on investment. The budget for EDC is \$22,000, which means they should be bringing in \$2,000,000 worth of business. M. Roy said that the committee was discussing that subject at the last meeting.

Election of Officers: J. O'Reilly nominated J. Lamson to the position of Budget Committee Chair and Alan Wilson to the position of Budget Committee Vice-Chair. K. Latchaw seconded the nomination. Hearing no further nominations, the vote was called, and all were in favor.

2019/2020 Budget Committee Schedule: The Committee agreed on a schedule of meetings for the 2019 and 2020 season. They are as follows: December 11 and 18th, 2019, January 8, 15 and 22, 2020, with a public hearing on February 5th. The committee discussed moving the budget meetings from 7pm to 6:30pm. J. O'Reilly moved to tentatively approve the schedule as presented, subject to change and to change the time for the meetings from 7pm to 6:30pm. J. Chamberlain seconded the motion with all in favor.

Minutes Approval: J. O'Reilly moved to approve the minutes of February 6th, 2019. A. Wilson seconded the motion with all in favor.

Adjournment: J. O'Reilly moved to adjourn at 9:13pm. A. Wilson seconded the motion with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Eleanor Boy
Recording Secretary