

Town of Newington, NH
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2013- Town Hall
7:00pm

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

Present: John Lamson, Gail Klanchesser, Rick Stern, David Mueller, Michael Marconi, Leila Richardson, Gail Pare, Sandra Sweeney, James Katkin, SAU 50 Business Administrator, Peter Latchaw and Martha Roy.

Guests: Jack O'Reilly, Melissa Prefontaine, Lee Lamson and Gup Knox

Tricentennial Celebration: John Lamson thanked all involved in making the Tricentennial a success for the whole town to enjoy. He stated that the Selectmen, Recreation Commission and Fire Department did an excellent job and everyone worked as good neighbors and the town will no doubt have a great celebration next year as well.

Election of Officers: John Lamson called for nominations from the floor . Gail Pare nominated John Lamson for Chair, seconded by Michael Marconi. John Lamson called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed.

Gail Pare moved to appoint John Lamson as Budget Committee Chair, Michael Marconi seconded the motion.. The motion passed with all in favor, save John Lamson who abstained from voting.

John called for nominations from the floor for Vice-Chair. Michael Marconi nominated Gail Klanchesser, seconded by Sandra Sweeney. John called for any other nominations. Hearing none, nominations were closed.

Michael Marconi moved to appoint Gail Klanchesser as Vice Chair to the Budget Committee and Sandra Sweeney seconded the nomination. All were in favor.

Vacancy/Appointment: John Lamson announced there was one vacancy known of on the Budget Committee. Gail Pare moved to appoint Jack O'Reilly, seconded by Sandra Sweeney. All were in favor. John Lamson explained that Jack will be sworn in and take official office at the next meeting. He will hold this position until the next Town Meeting when a vote must be taken to fill the rest of the term.

Library: John Lamson explained that he had invited members of the library to attend and give a brief update on the library addition project. Gup Knox explained that there is currently \$1,600,894.84 left of funds originally granted for the project. There are many Open Houses coming up and one already held that they invite all to attend. He stated that all contractors had been engaged and the project is coming along well.

Melissa Prefontaine explained that each process was bid out and that there are a few undecided matters still being worked on such as a rain garden, parking and a water line hopefully coming in through the Pease Development Authority. Rick Stern stated this shouldn't be an issue.

Melissa Prefontaine notified the Committee that the Library Trustees are applying for an LCHIP Grant to do some extra work not budget in the Town meeting warrant article. This would include: improving stairways, changing the upstairs into a small conference room and further landscaping if approved. She noted the awards will be given out in December.

Gup Knox stated that with the regular budget the department is on track and this year marks the first that they are paying their library specific bills directly through the library but having items such as utilities and personnel payments go through the town.

Melissa Prefontaine explained that Bauen Construction is the Construction Manager for the project and that they work on a fixed amount. The savings they make will go directly back to the library. Staff at the library will remain the same. The Trustees are currently working on developing new Library Personnel Policies due to laws that pertain only to Library personnel.

When questioned about the items on the upper level Melissa Prefontaine explained that these had been moved to the lower levels out of trust funds.

School Budget: The School had forwarded to the Budget Committee a Summary Report and the FORM DOE -25 summarizing the School year ending on June 30, 2013. Jim Katkin explained that enrollment continues to decrease. The SAU gave \$50,000 back to the Town of Newington this last fiscal year. Jim explained that for every \$1.00 of tax funding 69 cents stays here in Newington for salaries and benefits and the remainder is sent to Portsmouth.

He explained they have had a loss in the food surplus program even with \$27,000 in grant funds received. The after school program is doing very well for the elementary age school children.

Gail Pare asked if home schooled children can attend school programs and Jim explained that they can attend any program offered to Newington children such as a class or school sports team. John Lamson offered that this might be a good article for the Newington Neighbor to write about to make all aware of the benefit.

Jim Katkin went on to discuss the new enrollment this year. With two new students at the High School the budget will be taxed by \$28,000. This was not anticipated.

Jim reviewed the roof refurbishment project which went very smoothly. He also discussed the Food Program and referred the Committee to the Summary Report, delivered to the Committee, which outlined the loss due to new federal regulations.

John Lamson pointed out that if we increased students we wouldn't have to increase staff.

Jim Katkin stated that health insurance had gone up by 7.4% and they are bidding the bus contract currently.

Gail Pare asked if there would be any staffing changes and Jim Katkin replied that there were none anticipated at this time.

David Mueller stated that there are expected to be 1,000 new units of housing built on PDA land sitting in the town of Newington.

Town Budget : Leila Richardson asked whether a town employee's salary could be divided on the budget into more than one category.

The Committee asked why there were line items showing a zero appropriation and yet funds had been spent out of them. The Town will check on the exact reason this was accomplished and reply to the Committee.

The Safety line, Tricentennial and Town Clerk lines were all discussed. Further funds were expected to be spent later this year.

Rick Stern reported that 2014 will require a full revaluation. He also discussed that the town may outsource their dependent care deduction.

Gail Pare asked about the audit expense and Rick explained that the March audit of the Town Clerk /Tax Collector had taken place. There will be further funds expended for the regular audit.

John Lamson inquired about the Fire Truck lease purchase.

Gail Pare expressed concern with not staying on a regular replacement schedule with the police cruisers to avoid a large expense in one year.

Rick notified the Committee that the COAST bus service will be increasing to an annual cost of approximately \$31,000 in 2014. It may be placed in the Planning Board budget next year.

Gail Klanchesser asked if a COLA had been decided on for next year and Rick stated nothing had been finalized at this time.

The Committee inquired where Zoning Board of Adjustment expenses are paid out of. These have been paid out of the Planning Board line in the past.

Gail Pare asked if the \$5,100 left in the Town Garage maintenance line will be needed this year. She also inquired about which side of the Parsonage was being sided this year. Rick and Jack explained it was the street side.

She asked if the columbarium the Cemetery Trustees were discussing was going to come to fruition this year and Rick answered it would not affect the budget if it does. It will come out of the Capital Reserve fund.

Leila asked which town officials received stipends. John listed the various officials who receive stipends.

Martha explained that a charge against the Great Bay Stewards line in the amount of \$400 would be shown in the next report. She had charged Great Bay Services this amount instead.

Gail Pare inquired about Police ammunition and would further expenditures be made out of this line.

David was interested in why the Part time Police wages were over budget.

The Committee members requested that all expenditures made out of the new zero appropriation lines be reintegrated with their original lines.

Discussion was held regarding Mott Pond and Jack explained that Altus Engineering was working on a plan to allow for damage to the dam to be repaired.

In reviewing the mosquito spraying, Gail Klanchesser noted that the Sunset Road Race and 1713 celebration were not bug filled events. All went well. Gail Pare

mentioned that on Thursday evening there was a small problem with mosquitoes at Old Town Hall but that spray had been applied the next morning and the issue was solved for the Pow Wow.

John noted the good condition of the town roads and how Arboretum Drive was in excellent condition.

Gail Pare noted that the Welfare budget was in good shape.

Michael complimented Craig Daigle on running an excellent transfer station for the town. He stated it is a clean and neat operation.

He asked if there would be an appreciation dinner as in past years. Rick stated the Board had not determined how that would be handled this year.

Gail Pare asked about the Patriotic Needs line and Rick replied further expenses would be made from that line prior to year end.

The seawall under the Fox Point dock was discussed. Rick stated that the funds will be spent. There is engineering to be completed.

The CLG grant and payment schedule was discussed.

Rick stated that the Fox Point Pavilion capital reserve fund was discontinued and the Fox Point Maintenance Fund was established.

Michael stated that the Fox Point residence is in deplorable condition. The chicken coop needs to come down. Leila added that there were safety concerns such as lead paint at the residence. Discussion ensued about spending approximately \$150,000 to keep the residence up to snuff or the option of bringing in a modular home.

Future Meeting Dates: Gail Klanchesser suggested the following dates for the Budget Committee meetings. December 4, 11, January 8, 15, 22 and 29 (if needed). The Public Hearing could be held on February 8th.

Calendars would be distributed to the Committee as soon as they are on-line.

Members discussed how to receive minutes and other documents. Most preferred to pick them up at Town Hall.

The Committee stressed the request that departments bring in their memo explaining their budget at the same time they bring in the budget figures. This should all be provided to the Committee in advance.

Sandra Sweeney requested that the meetings be tape recorded in the future.
Martha Roy stated this will be done moving forward.

Adjournment:

Michael Marconi moved to adjourn at 8:48pm Gail Klanchesser seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Respectfully submitted by:

Martha S. Roy, Town Administrator