

**2014 Budget Committee Public Hearing  
School and Town – Town Hall  
Saturday, February 8, 2014**

***Chairman of the Budget Committee, John Lamson, called the meeting to order at 10:09am.***

**Present & Speakers:** Chr. Lamson, VC Gail Klanchesser (arrived during Town Public Hearing), Gail Pare, Sandra Sweeney, Leila Richardson, School Board Representative Christa Bellmare, Selectmen's Representative Rick Stern, (Jack O'Reilly & David Mueller were absent). Also present were Selectmen Jan Stuart and Cosmas Iocovozzi, Business Administrator Jim Katkin and Superintendent George Cushing of SAU 50 along with School Board member Deirdre Link and Principal Peter Latchaw, Police Chief Jon Tretter, Langdon Library Trustee Chair, Melissa Prefontaine, and members Gup Knox and Lee Lamson, Sewer Commissioners George Fletcher and Skip Cole, Planning Board Chairman Denis Hebert and member Justin Richardson, Pease Development Authority Representative and Cemetery Trustee Peggy Lamson, Conservation Commission member Nancy Cauvet, Jennifer Kent Weiner and Jim Weiner, Moderator and Fire Engineer Ruth Fletcher, Fire Engineers John Klanchesser and Darin Sabine, Fire Chief Andrew Head, Past Fire Chief Larry Wahl, Mike Mazeau, Theresa Tomlinson, Town Administrator, Martha Roy and various other members of the public.

**SCHOOL BUDGET HEARING (2014/2015):**

**Article 1.** To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the Budget Committee's recommended amount of \$1,933,442 (One Million Nine Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand Four Hundred Forty-Two Dollars) for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents, and for the payment for the statutory obligations of the District. This article does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles. (Majority vote required).

The Newington School Board recommends the operating budget.

***Chr. Lamson declared the school portion of the public hearing open at 10:05am.*** He invited the school to give a presentation regarding the budget. J. Katkin gave a brief overview referring to the handout that had been distributed. He explained that although the budget had increased by \$26,806, due to the increase in revenue, the town would be experiencing an approximately 3 cent decrease on the tax rate if the town valuation does not change. The revenue projected is \$51,000 more than the revenue of this year. The largest increase in the budget is an \$8,817 increase in schoolteacher salaries per the collective bargaining agreement that the town had approved last year. This was approximately a 2.2% increase. The second largest

increase is special projects grants which has no bearing on the taxes. He went on to explain health insurance was up by \$5,904. and a Library Media Generalist was added at a cost of \$ 4,154.

J. Richardson questioned what is anticipated for the building and would \$1,000 be enough. J. Katkin explained that there was about \$60,000 left in the Expendable Trust Fund for repairs necessary for the school. He went on to discuss the replacement of windows and repaired roof.

P. Lamson inquired about the per pupil cost for each school. J. Katkin stated that the cost is high at the Elementary School at about \$32,400 per pupil. The state wide average is \$14,000. He went on to say that there are 36 Elementary students, 10 attending Junior High and 29.5 students at the High School level with a per pupil tuition fee of \$14,658 or an increase of 4.22%.

Enrollment projections and zoning development laws were discussed as well as the number of school age students going to private school.

***Chr. Lamson declared the school portion of the public hearing closed at 10:38am.***

***G. Pare moved that the Budget Committee approve the School budget of \$1,933,442. Leila Richardson seconded this. John Lamson called for the vote of the Budget Committee. Motion passed 7-0.***

*A short recess took place while the MS 27 was signed.*

***At 10:45am, Chr. Lamson called the Budget Committee Public Hearing back to order.***

**ARTICLE 2:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$8,180,000 (gross budget) (eight million one hundred eighty thousand dollars) for the purpose of designing and constructing a Wastewater Treatment Facility upgrade, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$8,180,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33) and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and to apply for such grants as may be available to pay for the improvements and further to raise and appropriate an additional sum of \$277,465. (two hundred seventy seven thousand four hundred and sixty five dollars) for the first year's interest payment on the bond. Without impairing the nature of the bonds as general obligations of the Town, it is intended and expected that debt service on the bonds and any cost for the first year's interest payment shall be paid by sewer user fees.

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECTMEN (3-0)  
THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-0)  
(Two thirds ballot vote required)

The proposed project will upgrade the existing wastewater treatment facility in order to provide continued reliability, address safety and code items, and to meet the requirements of the US EPA and NH DES with respect to reducing or removing sources of nitrogen in the Great Bay estuary. Failure of this article could result in reduced reliability and safety and continued high concentrations of nitrogen in the Great Bay estuary.

**G. Pare moved to recommend Article 2 with a total of \$8,457,465 (including the first year's interest payment of the bond). This was seconded by S. Sweeney followed by Chr. Lamson asking for any questions or input from the public.**

Chr. Lamson discussed that the bond is expected to be a twenty year bond which will be paid by the Sewer users. C. Iocovozzi mentioned that the rates for Newington residences that have their septage taken to the Newington plant will increase as well. There being no further input from the public regarding the article, the public hearing was closed and Chr. Lamson called for a vote on Article 2. ***Motion passed 7-0.***

**ARTICLE 3:** To see what sum the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate for the operating budget. The Budget Committee recommends Seven Million Forty Nine Thousand Eighty One Dollars (\$7,049,081). This article does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.

THIS ARTICLE IS NOT RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECTMEN (3-0)  
THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-0)  
(The Selectmen recommend a budget of \$7,043,967.)

**G. Klanchesser moved to recommend \$7,049,081. This was seconded by G. Pare followed by Chr. Lamson opening up the public hearing for questions and comments** and reminding the public about all of the handouts on the table in the back of the room.

Before the Public Hearing Chr. Lamson turned over the floor to Chair of the Selectmen Rick Stern who asked for a moment of silence for the Town's previous custodian Dick Rines who had recently passed away.

J. Kent Weiner questioned why the Budget Committee's budget was different than the Selectmen's budget. Chr Lamson answered that the difference was within the Fire Department budget specifically \$7,500. for call firefighter hours.

J. Weiner asked about the Library and whether there would be any cost increases or decreases. Further he asked about the Librarian's degree. M. Prefontaine responded that the Librarian did not have a degree in Library Science but this was not required and many libraries in the area have a similar situation. There had been no additional staff added but other costs had been increased such as insurance to cover the new addition. Replacement cost insurance for items has been added. Trust fund expenses and interest are reported in the budget for the first time in accordance with law.

M. Mazeau requested the reason that the Town Office Bookkeeper hours had increased compared to the previous bookkeeper. M. Roy stated that she had been working on the Town Report with her, which was not completed previously and she has helping the Board with new reporting as well. R Stern stated that the new bookkeeper is keeping better track of the books. M. Mazeau believed the Town hall always ran pretty well with the 6 hour bookkeeper. J Weiner stated that he thought the current bookkeeper is providing a better set of information to run the town. C. Bellmare wanted clarification regarding the new position is a \$40 position and the previous position was at \$25 per hour. P Lamson stated that the new Bookkeeper had been a tremendous help to her and the library regarding budgeting issues and that the town had a backlog in certain areas that are now being resolved.

D Hebert explained to the Budget Committee that there are new PSNH power lines that are being proposed to go through Newington and through many residential properties. He asked that there be further funds placed in the legal line to cover the town's cost to insure these very large lines (similar to the size of lines at the Crossing) are buried. J Stuart had received a call from PSNH and they are not ready to have a public hearing. No guarantee from PSNH about burying the lines through the residential areas.

L. Wahl commented on the parking problem that currently exists at the Meeting House and the fact that due to Library addition construction parking spaces have been lost. He stated that this issue needs to be addressed. There is an increased need for parking at the Meeting House.

N Cauvet stated that the town website needs to be updated.

He also expressed a concern that we are salting the road too heavily this winter. R. Stern replied that the Highway Department should have gone to salt school to learn how to calibrate their trucks but will be attending this year.

J. Weiner stated that a significantly larger number should be funded for the PSNH legal counsel (on the power line issue) in the area of at least \$30,000.

The Chr. called for a quick break.

The Chr. reconvened the public hearing.

T. Tomlinson stated that under the Town Clerk budget it states “30-40 hours per week” but the hours are less than the hours of the previous Town Clerk/Tax Collector. She, as the previous Deputy did not work the full day at the elections when she held the position and believed the office hours were excessive as well. M Roy stated that the Town Clerk takes customers even before or after her official hours and this year they have extensive hours for the primary and state elections.

M. Mazeau asked about COAST and why the figure has gone up to \$31,000. R. Stern explained that \$10,000 originally donated by Cumberland Farms was for a bus stop but the Town decided not to build it therefore they did not want to accept the funds. D Hebert explained COAST is required by federal law to pick up anyone within a half mile and COAST provides service to the industrial areas and the malls.

M. Mazeau explained that he would have to ride an hour and twenty minutes to get to Exeter. J Stuart stated that she is not in favor of the COAST increase. She stated the other surrounding communities are reducing their funding to COAST. It would be better served to be in the Regional Associations line of the budget. She has asked COAST to make a loop around the residential area but they have stated that will not do this.

J. Richardson pointed out that the industries and commercial entities are subsidizing the town residents’ tax base by roughly 75% and we should support this service for them.

P Lamson asked the total number of fire department employees. M Roy listed the positions and the Fire Chief elaborated. P Lamson asked for base pay for the call firemen and total budget for the Fire Department and the Chief responded that their base pay is \$10. (or \$14.70 if covering a shift) and Chr. Lamson answered that the Fire budget was \$1,498,000. She also asked for rates of BC/BS this year. R Stern replied that the 2013 plan included a deductible of \$250 for a single plan and \$500. for two person and family and this was a self insured plan. He explained that the Board wanted to move away from being involved in the insurance business and the risk associated with it. If we stayed with the Comp 2500 he stated it would be a higher percentage increase than the plan the town decided on. He also listed the potential exposure of \$99,000 under the old Comp 2500 plan and noted that in 2013 the Town had spent very close to all of the self insured funds set aside in the Expendable Trust Fund for that purpose. The new Blue Choice plan had non-union monthly premium rates as follows: single plan is \$947.85, two-person is \$1,645.43 and the family plan is \$2,559.19. The town is continuing with requiring all new employees to pay 10% of the premium. P. Lamson inquired about the total number of

Police Department employees. Chief Tretter replied the Police Department has 10 full time employees, 3 part time employees and 1 administrative employee.

Chr Lamson explained that the Firemen who have filed to establish a union couldn't have pay and benefits changed at this time. Once their package has been negotiated this will occur. They will have a COLA adjustment as that Board of Selectmen vote occurred prior to the union filing taking place.

M Mazeau asked as to why there was an addition of Jackson Lewis to the list of law firms representing the Town. M Roy responded that this national firm has been used for union issues and other employment issues.

Chr Lamson closed the public portion of the hearing and moved the Committee into their meeting to discuss the figures for Article 3.

R. Stern moved to add \$2,386. to the budget. This was seconded by G. Pare. The town had only budgeted for one election and there will be 3 this year. Chr. Lamson called for a vote on the amendment. All were in favor. The Chair stated that the new total was \$7,051,467.

R. Stern moved to add \$30,000 to the Town legal budget. S. Sweeney seconded the motion. C Bellmare asked if there was any other place in the budget for example the Bookkeeper line. M Roy stated that the Bookkeeper line was a guaranteed amount to that position. All were in favor of the amendment.

C. Bellmare asked for clarification of the new Fire Department request. G Klanchesser specified all of the changes they were requesting. R. Fletcher explained that the reason there were two budgets is that the Fire Engineers were not notified that the Board had cut the budget. This is the reason the second budget was submitted, to reflect the Engineers proposed changes in response to those cuts. M. Roy asked if the amended budget included any union steps or longevity. R Fletcher replied they were not. J Klanchesser offered further clarification about the total Fire Dept. budget. **G Pare moved to add \$5,809 to bottom line of the Fire Dept.; C. Bellmare seconded the motion.** R Stern asked why this is being added to the budget.

J Klanchesser stated that the Fire Dept. requests to send through the Budget Committee amount originally proposed and withdraws their second budget. **Both Budget Committee members withdrew their motions.**

**Chr Lamson called for a vote on the total town budget \$7,081,467. The motion passed at 6-1 with R. Stern opposing.**

**ARTICLE 4:** To see if the town will raise and appropriate \$195,713 for the purpose of purchasing a Ram 4500 Ambulance manufactured by PL Custom for the fire department and further to authorize the withdrawal of \$150,000 from the Ambulance and Major Medical Equipment Replacement Fund created for that purpose. The remaining amount of \$45,713 to be raised by taxation.

THIS ARTICLE IS NOT RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECTMEN (3-0)

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-0)

Est in 2012, we added \$25,000 to it last year. As of December 31, 2013, we had a balance of  
\$155,753.16

Chr. Lamson opened the public hearing on Article 4. Chr Lamson asked the Board for an explanation as to why they are not recommending this article. R. Stern stated that the Board of Selectmen was not in favor due to the ability to purchase a gas ambulance at \$152,321. C. Iocovozzi stated that the gas vehicles can be turned on quickly and many mechanical issues with the new diesel engines. L Wahl is in favor of the proposed diesel ambulance. He stated he has had a gas engine that was losing oil after 6 years. A. Head stated that the chassis was the difference between the two vehicles. J Stuart asked for the condition of our current ambulance. A. Head stated that the box in the back of the ambulance is falling apart. M Prefontaine asked about the immediate, operating and maintenance cost as well as environmental impact and longevity of the various proposed vehicles. A. Head and R. Stern responded with details of gas versus diesel. A. Head added that the diesel model is a four wheel drive. D. Sabine mentioned that the gas model labor time to repair the gas ambulance is too extensive and the public needs to wait for a mutual aid ambulance to respond. Ambulances need to idle so that medicines do not freeze up among other reasons.

**Chr. Lamson closed the Public Hearing.**

**G. Pare moved to recommend Article 4 at \$195,713. including the withdrawal of \$150,000. from the Capital Reserve fund and raising the additional \$45,713. by taxation. This was seconded by G. Klanchesser. Chr. Lamson called for a vote. The motion passed 6-1 with R. Stern opposed.**

**ARTICLE 5:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate Thirty Five Thousand Dollars (\$35,000) to be added to the existing Expendable Trust Fund established in 2012 under the provisions of RSA 31:19-a known as the Health Plan Deductible Supplement Fund.

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECTMEN (3-0)

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-0)

Est. in 2012, we added \$70,000 to it last year. As of December 31, 2013, we had a balance of

\$7,741.98

Chr Lamson opened the Public Hearing and asked for public comment, hearing none, Chr Lamson closed the public hearing and asked for a motion and second on the article. **G Klanchesser moved to approve Article 5 as written, seconded by G Pare. Chr Lamson called for a vote on Article 5. All were in favor.**

**ARTICLE 6:** On petition of resident Michael Mazeau of 124 Fox Point Road and at least 24 other registered voters in the Town of Newington, shall the Town of Newington vote to eliminate the salaried with benefits position of Town Planner (aka Planning Director) and to contract with Rockingham Planning Commission or other consulting firm on an as-needed basis for our planning needs.

J Richardson commented that the budget law requires a vote on warrant article 6. Chr Lamson stated this was a separate article without a dollar amount listed. Chr Lamson opened a brief public hearing on the matter. M Roy stated that Dept. of Revenue Administration reviewed the article and because there was not a specific dollar amount listed the Selectmen and Budget Committee do not have to vote to recommend this up or down. However if they do decide to vote on this article they must also vote on Article 12. C Bellmare expressed opposition to voting on this article. **The Chair polled the Budget Committee and the determination was to not address the warrant article at this time.** S Sweeney expressed concern about the Town Meeting being able to make a fully informed decision. Chr Lamson stated that the necessary parties will be ready to discuss the matter at town meeting.

**ARTICLE 7:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) 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.

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECTMEN (3-0)

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-0)

Added \$25,000 last year. As of December 31, 2013 we had a balance of \$360,741.



Chr Lamson opened the public hearing. J Richardson expressed concern at the cut to \$5,000. J Stuart explained that the Conservation Commission amount was dropped because it was learned that an extra \$70,000 (of land use change tax) has been added just recently to that fund. G Pare asked if the Planning Board was aware of whether there will be further land use transfers in the future. D Hebert stated that he is not aware of any other land use transfers at this time however there may be in the future.

Chr Lamson closed the public hearing and opened the Budget Committee meeting. **G Klanchesser moved to approve Article 7 as written, R Stern seconded. Chr Lamson called for a vote. All were in favor.**

**Chr Lamson called a recess of 5 minutes.**

**ARTICLE 8:** 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 existing Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the Replacement and/or Repair of Vehicles Operated by the Fire Department.

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECTMEN (3-0)  
THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-0)  
Added \$15,000 last year. As of December 31, 2013, this fund had a balance of \$36,008.24

Chr Lamson opened the public hearing on Article 8. L Wahl stated that we should have \$50,000 in the warrant article. C Iocovozzi stated that due to other tax abatements outstanding and that there needs to be plan for staffing to run the trucks. L Richardson asked how many fire trucks we currently had and the response was three. She stated that she did not see a need for further extensive funding currently. D Hebert stated that small items should not be taken out of capital reserve funds. L Wahl stated that this warrant article should be just for major repairs. P Lamson stated that she understood there were issues that caused the Board to cut back warrant articles for this year only.

Chr Lamson closed the public hearing and opened the Budget Committee meeting. **G Pare moved to approve Article 8 in the amount of \$25,000; G Klanchesser seconded this.** G Klanchesser confused by C Iocovozzi statement when the Board of Selectmen cut the firemen hours. C. Iocovozzi stated a plan needed to be completed about how many firemen and trucks were needed before anything further was funded. **Chr. Lamson called for a vote and all were in favor.**

**ARTICLE 9:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be added to our existing Capital Reserve

Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of Replacement and/or Major Repairs of Vehicles and equipment operated by the Highway Department.

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECTMEN (3-0)

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-0)

Added \$25,000 last year. As of December 31, 2013 this fund shows a balance of \$70,802.82

Chr. Lamson opened the public hearing. L Wahl asked the Selectmen about the status about Woodbury Avenue. J Stuart stated that it will be 2 years at best before completion. C Iocovozzi and D Sabine both commented on the Woodbury Avenue and leasing equipment once the town takes it over.

Chr. Lamson closed the public hearing and opened the Budget Committee meeting. **G Klanchesser moved to recommend Article 9 as written, seconded by G. Pare. All were in favor.**

**ARTICLE 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in the existing Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 known as the Major Road Work Fund which was established for the purpose of funding major improvements to roadways.

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECTMEN (3-0)

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-0)

Added \$20,000 last year. As of December 31, 2013 we had a balance of \$167,386.17

Chr Lamson opened the Public Hearing. D Hebert stated that \$5,000. was not enough but he understood the dilemma of financing. Chr Lamson closed the public hearing and opened the Budget Committee meeting. **R Stern moved to recommend Article 10, S Sweeney seconded this. All were in favor.**

**ARTICLE 11:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in the existing Capital Reserve Fund known as the Police Dept. Radio/Electronics Fund established in 1998 (and amended) under the provisions of RSA 35:1, which was established for the purpose of purchasing, replacement or repair of needed electronics and or communication devices.

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE SELECTMEN (3-0)

THIS ARTICLE IS RECOMMENDED BY THE BUDGET COMMITTEE (0-0)

Added \$15,000 last year. As of December 31, 2013 we had a balance of \$14,427.87

Chair Lamson opened the public hearing. Hearing no comments he closed the public hearing and opened the Budget Committee Hearing. **G Klanchesser moved to recommend Article 11, G Pare seconded with all in favor.**

**G Klanchesser moved to adjourn, G. Pare seconded with all in favor.** Chr  
Lamson asked for all Budget Committee members to remain for MS 7 signature.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha S. Roy  
Town Administrator