

**Budget Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, January 16, 2013**  
**Town Hall 7:00pm**

***Chr. J. Lamson called the meeting to order at 7:00pm***

**Present:** Chairman John Lamson, VC Gail Klanchesser, Mary Crossley, Michael Marconi, Janis Marconi, Sandra Sweeney, Gail Pare, Selectman's Rep Jack O'Reilly, School Board Rep Dave Mueller (in audience), Superintendent of Schools George Cushing, School Board Members Deirdre Link, Krista Bellmare, Principal Pete Latshaw and Administrative Assistant Beatrice Marconi. Mr. Sweeney was in the audience.

**Minute Approval:** *G Pare moved to accept the minutes of January 9<sup>th</sup> as written. M. Marconi seconded with motion passing 8-0.*

**2013-2014 School Budget Request of \$ 1,899,041:** *VC G Klanchesser moved to tentatively accept the school budget request of \$ 1,899,041. S Sweeney seconded. The motion passed 8-0-1 (with D. Mueller abstaining) after the following discussion.*

Superintendent George Cushing opened the evening by announcing he was filling in for Jim Katkin, who generally presents the budget. He began by expressing pleasure with the hiring of Principal Pete Latshaw and went on to state that their budget reflects a \$33,747 increase which will have zero effect on Newington's tax rate and will be absorbed with the unspent fund balance.

Teacher's contract: Being a 3 year term, their salaries will be a 2% increase the first year, then 2% the second and 2% the third year. They will be working together to address health care costs and the evaluation process is still being developed. Teachers still get steps however only 2 teachers are on the step system at the present time. C.O.L.A. was 1.7% - teachers got 2%.

WA #4 to allow the school district retention of 2.5% of Dist Assessment which in Newington's case is about \$40,000. This cannot carry over and spending of the retention must be approved by the department of education as well. This is similar to the unreserved fund balance.

G Pare expressed excitement with the new science program.

There are 36 students attending Newington Elementary School.

D. Link went on stating that smaller schools are better as when you ship your child off to another town's school, you lose control as you cannot vote. Technology availability is unlimited and the students have the opportunity for a personalized education. If our school was to close, approximately \$350 would be saved per tax bill. There are many stationary costs for schools so the per pupil cost whether you have 5 or 50 students is not really a true reflection.

K. Bellmare spoke on the integration into the middle and high schools and the monitoring process.

S Sweeney, who has been volunteering for 10 years in our school, has seen the opportunities offered to the kids. Kindergartners are taught Spanish. She is pleased with the base our children are given.

Chr. Lamson added that in many communities, 65-70% of the town's budget is the school.

Mr. Cushing went on to state that our school could handle up to 60 students easily.

J. O'Reilly asked about the 16% increase in administration – which is the shared cost of a technology professional. The special ed director was cut back from 5 days to 3. Selectman O'Reilly suggested the school have an open house to show the public the technology and education level our students are receiving here in Newington.

M Marconi complimented George and the entire school board on their efforts and budget. George went on to explain the formula in estimating number of students for budgeting purposes for tuition for the middle and high schools.

K. Bellmare stated that there is one Newington student in private school at this time.

The Committee briefly touched on the business profits tax change that got passed as a means to donate to private tuitions – which is being challenged.

Middle school tuition is calculated at about \$16,000 per child with the high school at \$14,277 per.

Chr. Lamson commented that Portsmouth benefits greatly with our students attending Portsmouth middle school as now it classifies it as a regional school and is a gain of about \$4,000,000 in available money.

Principal Latshaw added that our students mix very well in the transition which begins quite early to heighten the comfort level going into the middle school.

The Chef continues to be an asset at the school.

The building is in good shape, however the roof continues to be a concern. There is a capital reserve with about \$100,000 set aside for building needs.

M. Marconi spoke of the security at the school. The principal continues to work with Police and Fire and an improved plan has been in the process for well over a year.

***Chr. Lamson then called for the vote of \$1,899,041 which passed 8-0-1 with D. Mueller abstaining.***

Selectman's Rep Jack O'Reilly gave a brief overview of the General Government budget slated for the January 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting with ***a motion to adjourn coming at 8:15pm with no objections.***

Respectfully Submitted,

***Beatrice Marconi***  
Administrative Assistant