

Town of Newington, NH  
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, January 16, 2019 Town Hall

Chair John Lamson called the meeting to order at 6:58pm

**Present:** Chair, John Lamson, Vice-Chair, Brandon Arsenault, Sandra Sweeney, School Board Rep, Jack O'Reilly, Jamie Belanger, Jennifer Kent Weiner, William Wright, Katherine Latchaw, Selectmen's Rep, Mike Marconi, Chair, Board of Selectmen, Ted Connors, Selectman, Ken Latchaw, Assistant Fire Chief, EJ Hoyt, Fire Engineer, John Klanchesser, Newington School Principal, Peter Latchaw, SAU 50 Business Administrator, Amy Ransom, Conservation Commission Co-Chair, Jane Hislop, Police Chief, Mike Bilodeau, Ann Hebert, Emily Savinelli, Martha Roy, Town Administrator and Eleanor Boy, Recorder.

John Lamson announced that Jim Katkin, the former SAU 50 Business Administrator, had passed away. J. Lamson remembered Jim Katkin as an honorable professional that he admired tremendously. Jim served 39 years as the SAU 50 Business Administrator. He will be deeply missed.

**J. O'Reilly moved to approve the minutes of January 9th, 2019. Katherine Latchaw seconded the motion, with all in favor.**

**School District Budget Review:**

J. Lamson asked for a motion to approve the School budget of \$2,191,162.

**J. Belanger moved to tentatively approve the School budget of \$2,191,162.**

**S. Sweeney seconded the motion.**

Amy Ransom presented the school budget to the Budget Committee. Discussion ensued on previous budget comparisons to the current budget, Portsmouth tuition, the Special Education budget and the impact on the number of tuition students for Newington. The Newington school's current enrollment is 52, 14 of these students are tuition students. Newington students do very well on the standardized testing in NH. M. Marconi commended Peter Latchaw for doing an outstanding job. J. Belanger stated that the quality of education at the school is very good. S. Sweeney, who has volunteered at the school for 16 years, thought the teachers are wonderful and are of very high quality.

**J. Lamson called for a vote on the School budget and all were in favor of \$2,191,162.**

**Audited Undesignated Fund Balance & Monthly Balance:**

J. Lamson explained that the State audits and controls what is in the balance. If a municipality has too much money in the undesignated balance then the State would have the municipality use some of it to lower the tax rate. If a municipality has too little in the balance then the State would recommend the municipality increase taxes to fund the balance. The Town submits its budget to the State every year. The Town can only spend the budgeted amount that has been approved by the Town Meeting. J. Belanger asked if the balance is similar from year to year. J. Lamson explained that the balance increases and decreases during the year depending on what time of year it is. The balance is high right after everyone pays their taxes and it is low right before everyone pays their taxes.

All the money that is left over from the budget goes into the undesignated fund balance.

**Police Capital Outlay Budget:**

**S. Sweeney moved to tentatively approve the Police Capital Outlay budget of \$45,000. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.**

Police Chief Mike Bilodeau explained that the Police Department purchases a new vehicle every year. This year he would like to keep the old cruiser for details. M. Bilodeau is expecting more details in 2019 due to the increased work needed with the addition of Woodbury Ave. The Chief is hoping that if the department uses the older car for details then it will extend the life of the new cruiser. The department will have 8 vehicles with the addition of this one in 2019. J. Kent Weiner asked if the officers going to court could use their own cars and get reimbursed for mileage. M. Bilodeau explained that the officers take one car to court. Parking is very difficult by the courthouse, it is easier to get a spot with a cruiser. J. Lamson asked about the increased maintenance and insurance costs. The Chief will keep an eye on maintenance costs to make sure the department isn't spending too much on the older vehicles.

**J. Lamson called for a vote on the Police Capital Outlay Budget of \$45,000. All were in favor.**

**Fire Capital Outlay Budget:**

**S. Sweeney moved to tentatively approve the Fire Capital Outlay budget of \$43,470. J. Kent Weiner seconded the motion.**

EJ Hoyt explained that \$5,800 is for a new battery backup, \$10,000 is for 3 new portable radios and \$27,670 for the lease to own payment for the SCBA equipment.

**J. Lamson called for a vote on the Fire Capital Outlay budget of \$43,470. All were in favor.**

**J. Lamson called for a vote on the entire Capital Outlay budget of \$162,916. All were in favor.**

**Fire Computer Budget Increase Request of \$11,000:**

**J. O'Reilly moved to tentatively approve the increase of \$11,000 to the Fire Department budget. Katherine Latchaw seconded the motion.**

EJ Hoyt explained that the computers at the Fire Station need some updates to secure them. The firewall, server and email system need to be updated.

J. Belanger asked about using a "cloud" backup system instead of a server. EJ Hoyt explained that the State requires them to use a server for their EMS reporting. The Town of Rye and Greenland have recently had their information hacked and held hostage from their cloud back up system. J. Kent Weiner urged the departments to make sure that they can connect with each other in the future.

**J. O'Reilly moved to increase the Fire Department budget to \$1,771,105. Katherine Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.**

**Ambulance Capital Reserve Warrant Article:**

Branson Arsenault entered the meeting.

EJ Hoyt told the committee that the Fire Department is asking for \$106,000 to be added to the Ambulance capital reserve fund in 2019. There is \$18,254 in the capital reserve account now. A new ambulance costs approximately \$375,000. The current ambulance is 4 years old so the Fire Department would like to add money each year in anticipation of purchasing a new ambulance in 4 or 5 years.

J. Belanger asked about the "life" of an ambulance. E. Hoyt said that the last two ambulances have lasted approximately nine years each. The ambulance call volume is up 11 % this year. W. Wright asked about the resale value of a used ambulance. E. Hoyt said it depends on the condition. J. Kent Weiner thought the Town should develop a replacement policy. B. Arsenault asked why the Town doesn't use vans. E. Hoyt explained that vans are used for transportation rather than emergency response..

**J. O'Reilly moved to approve the Ambulance Capital Reserve Warrant Article amount of \$106,000. S. Sweeney seconded the motion, B. Arsenault opposed, with all others in favor.**

**Fire Vehicle Capital Reserve Warrant Article:**

The Fire Department would like \$20,000 to be put in the Fire Vehicle capital reserve warrant article.

**J. Kent Weiner moved to approve \$20,000 for the Fire Vehicle Capital Reserve Warrant Article. Katherine Latchaw seconded the motion with all in favor.**

**Conservation Commission Fund Capital Reserve Warrant Article:**

Conservation Commission Co-Chair Jane Hislop explained that the Ripley conservation easement fell through so the commission would like the \$40,000,

that was set aside for that purchase, to be added to the Conservation Fund Warrant Article.

J. Belanger asked why the easement had fallen through. J. Hislop thought that it had just taken too long. B. Arsenault asked if they had any other properties they were looking at. J. Hislop encouraged anyone who knows a property owner that has wetlands on their property and would like to consider an easement to contact the Conservation Commission.

**J. Kent Weiner moved to increase the Conservation Commission Warrant Article from \$30,000 to \$70,000. S. Sweeney seconded the motion with B. Arsenault opposed and all others in favor.**

**The Budget Public Hearing is February 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm at the Town Hall. The snow date is February 8<sup>th</sup>.**

**J. Kent Weiner moved to adjourn at 9:11pm. S. Sweeney seconded the motion with all in favor.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Eleanor Boy  
Recorder**