**2015 Budget Public Hearing**

**School and Town – Town Hall**

**Saturday, February 7, 2015**

**Chairman of the Budget Committee, John Lamson, called the public hearing to order at 10:06a.m.**

**Present:** Chr. John Lamson, VC Gail Klanchesser, Gail Pare, Michael Marconi, Sandra Sweeney, Leila Richardson, Katherine Latchaw, Alan Wilson, School Board Representative David Mueller and Selectmen’s Representative Cosmas Iocovozzi, (Brandon Arsenault was absent). Also present were Superintendent Salvatore Petralia of SAU 50, Business Administrator Jim Katkin, School Board Chair Deirdre Link, School Board member Christa Belmare and Principal Peter Latchaw, SAU Special Education Director Patricia Dowey, Board of Selectmen Chair, Jan Stuart, Police Chief Jon Tretter, Police Commissioner Jack Hoyt, Langdon Library Trustees Jack O’Reilly, Gup Knox and Steve Bush, Sewer Commissioner George Fletcher, Planning Board Chair Denis Hebert and member Justin Richardson, Cemetery Trustee Peggy Lamson, Moderator and Fire Engineer Ruth Fletcher, Fire Engineers John Klanchesser and Darin Sabine, Past Fire Chief Larry Wahl, Conservation Commission member Jim Weiner, Ann Hebert, Finance Director Anita Treloar, Town Administrator Martha Roy and various other members of the public.

**Article 1**

To see if the Newington School District will vote to raise and appropriate the budget committee's recommended amount of $2,152,146 (Two Million One Hundred Fifty-Two Thousand One Hundred Forty-Six 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 contained in special or individual articles addressed separately. (Majority vote required.) (NOTE: This warrant article [operating budget] does not include appropriations in ANY other warrant article.)

***J. Lamson declared the School portion of the public hearing open at 10:06a.m.***

**G. Pare moved to recommend Article 1 in the amount of $2,152,146. S. Sweeney seconded the motion.**

Chair Lamson 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 the budget had increased by $218,704 due to very large special education expenditures, which will carry over into next year. This will equate to an 11% increase or an increase in the tax rate of $.21 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation. J. Katkin explained that the school had flat tax rate for two years but this year it would need to increase. J. Lamson asked for public comment on the school budget. P. Lamson expressed thanks to J. Katkin for an excellent budget. J. Lamson introduced the new Superintendent of Schools, Salvatore Petralia to all. Hearing no further comment on the budget he closed the public hearing. 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 discussed the replacement of windows and repaired roof.

Chr. Lamson declared the school portion of the public hearing closed and called for a vote.

**Vote: 9-0-1 with D. Mueller abstaining.**

**Article 2:**

To see if the Newington School District will vote to discontinue the Building Addition Capital Reserve Fund created in 1995. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the school district's general fund. (Majority vote required.)

**G. Klanchesser moved to recommend Article 2 in the amount of $23,750. G. Pare seconded the motion.**

J. Katkin explained that this article would place funds back in the general fund to help reduce taxes.

Hearing no public comment J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote on Article 2**.**

**Vote: All in favor.**

**Article 3:**

To see if the Newington School District will vote to raise and appropriate $40,000 (Forty Thousand Dollars) for the school district for the current year to cover unanticipated special education costs. (Majority vote required.) (NOTE: This warrant article does not include appropriations in ANY other warrant article.)

**G. Klanchesser moved to recommend Article 3. K. Latchaw seconded the motion.**

L. Wahl asked if this was the entire responsibility of Newington. J. Katkin replied that it was solely Newington’s liability. He went on to explain that the Budget Committee had requested and the State Department of Education had approved $46,000 of the 2.5% retainage also being used to reduce taxation.

J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

J. Lamson recessed the Budget Committee Public Hearing at 10:24a.m.

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***J. Lamson called the meeting back to order and the Budget Committee proceeded to hold the Town Budget Hearing.***

**Article 3:**

To see what sum the municipality will vote to raise and appropriate for the operating budget. The Budget Committee recommends Six Million, Nine Hundred Forty One Thousand, Eight Hundred and Thirty Six Dollars ($6,941,836). This article does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.

**G. Klanchesser moved to recommend Article 3 in the amount of $6,941,836. G. Pare seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing and explained that everyone had made an attempt to keep their budgets down to prevent the tax rate from increasing, if possible. He stated that the Budget Committee had recommended the expenditure of $31,600 for COAST Bus, which was not supported by the Selectmen thus the difference in recommended amounts between the two groups.

J. Richardson requested that weeding and general upkeep should be included for the hill as one enters the Town. J. Stuart stated that this would be accomplished in the future. D. Hebert described COAST Bus services as transportation that benefited the employees and businesses of Newington and the funds received were matched by a federal grant. He further stated that a lack of patronage prohibits COAST from coming into the center of Newington. Various residents spoke gave input on the funding of COAST Bus.

L. Wahl asked which roads would be paved in 2015. C. Iocovozzi replied that Fox Point Road, Old Post Road and Piscataqua (from Woodbury back) are expected to be paved. There are also a number of short cul de sacs off of Little Bay Road that will be paved if funds allow. Drainage on McIntyre Road was discussed as well as the eventual take over of Woodbury Avenue, which was being required by the State. C. Iocovozzi stated that the Selectmen are having engineers report on all necessary upgrades to Woodbury Avenue, which need to be accomplished by the State prior to transferring ownership. He confirmed that Town Meeting would have to approve this take over prior to possession. L. Wahl asked about paving the Fire Department parking lot as well. This will be discussed by the Selectmen.

J. Lamson explained that the Firefighters union and the Town management parties are still negotiating and there will be a warrant article relative to their pay and benefits by next year’s town meeting. It was reported that there are 12 union members.

Body cameras for police officers were briefly discussed. These are not budgeted at this time.

G. Pare commended the Town departments on their hard work to keep their budgets down.

J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

**Article 4:**

To see if the Town shall vote to appropriate and apply the anticipated distribution of funds from trusts held for the benefit of Langdon Public Library to be obtained by court order in the amount of Four-Hundred Thirty-Two Thousand, Four-Hundred Thirty Dollars [$432,430.], less attorneys’ fees as ordered by the court, to make payment on the General Obligation Bond (No. R-1, registered owner, T.D. Bank, N.A.) in the principal amount of $1,789,000, in equal pro-rated amount for each year remaining until the bond’s May 2, 2018, maturity date, and consistent with the terms of said bond, which purpose was to pay for the improvement of Langdon Public Library.

**M. Marconi moved to recommend Article 4 in the amount of $432,430 less attorney’s fees. G. Pare seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing and explained that this is regarding applying the anticipated distribution of Library trust fund interest to pay the Library Addition bond down. J. O’Reilly pointed out that Library had promised to return these funds to the Town when the Library addition bond was originally approved by Town Meeting. J. Stuart inquired as to the cost of attorney’s fees and was told they were approximately $10,000- $12,000. A. Treloar explained that this was a balance sheet item which will be accounted for separately following State Department of Revenue recommendations.

J. Lamson closed the pubic hearing and called for a vote. **The vote was 9-0-1 with J. Lamson abstaining**.

**Article 5:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate Fifteen Thousand Dollars ($15,000) 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.

**M. Marconi moved to recommend Article 5. G. Klanchesser seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. Hearing no public comment he closed the public hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

**Article 6:**

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.

**D. Mueller moved to recommend Article 6. M. Marconi seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. A. Hebert asked what the total expenses were for Fire Vehicles in 2014. The Fire Chief answered that there were no expenses in this last year.

J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

**Article 7:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars ($15,000) 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.

**D. Mueller moved to recommend Article 7. M. Marconi seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. D. Hebert urged the Committee to recommend $25,000 instead of $15,000 stating that we need to be ready to purchase targeted land from this fund if the opportunity arises. Discussion ensued between C. Iocovozzi, D. Hebert and J. Richardson about bonding the purchase of land if necessary and whether a Special Town Meeting could be approved for the purpose of land purchase.

J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

**Article 8:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) 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.

**M. Marconi moved to recommend Article 8. G. Klanchesser seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. J. O’Reilly commended the Highway Department on the great work they have down in keeping the roads clear in the face of the heavy winter storms that have occurred this season.

**J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote. All were in favor.**

**Article 9:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) 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.

**D. Mueller moved to recommend Article 9. M. Marconi seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. Hearing no comment he closed the hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor**.

**Article 10:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) to be placed in the existing Capital Reserve Fund under provisions of RSA 35:1 for the Replacement of the Town Ambulance and any Major Medical Equipment.

**M. Marconi moved to recommend Article 10. D. Mueller seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. Hearing no comment he closed the hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

**Article 11:**

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund to be known as the Fire Department Communications Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of maintenance, replacement and improvements of existing Radio, Fire Alarm, and computer equipment, and to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand dollars ($10,000) to be placed in this fund, and to name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend.

**M. Marconi moved to recommend Article 11. D. Mueller seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. M. Marconi assured all present that the Budget Committee had reviewed all of the cost items in detail even though there was not lengthy discussion at the hearing.

J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

**Article 12:**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000) 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 electronic and or communication devices.”

**M. Marconi moved to recommend Article 12. D. Mueller seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. D. Hebert asked if the radios were compatible with other electronic devices and J. Tretter replied that they were.

J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

**Article 13:**

To see if the Town shall vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000) to be added to the existing Capital Reserve Fund established under the provisions of RSA 35:1 and known as the Langdon Library Building Fund, with the Library Trustees as agents to expend.

**D. Mueller moved to recommend Article 13. M. Marconi seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. A. Hebert expressed concern regarding the projects still remaining to be completed with the library. G. Knox discussed the repointing of the old library, which wasn’t known until after the funds had been appropriated. Discussion ensued about the elaborate items that were purchased rather than spending funds on necessities. G. Knox replied that the Trustees believed they were going to be successful in the attainment of an LCHIP grant but this was not approved. A. Hebert listed the coffee bar, crown molding and other items as excessive. J. Richardson expressed support of the article. J. O’Reilly stated that maintenance of the building was included in the original purpose of the article.

J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

**Article 14:**

To see if the Town of Newington will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000) to be added to the existing Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of maintenance, repair and improvements of Town Recreational Facilities and Equipment.

**G. Klanchesser moved to recommend Article 14. S. Sweeney seconded the motion.**

J. Lamson opened the public hearing. C. Iocovozzi explained that this Capital Reserve fund was to repair the tennis and basket ball courts replacement of recreation equipment in disrepair and maintenance of the athletic fields. D. Mueller noted that the tennis court was in need of repair.

J. Lamson closed the public hearing and called for a vote. **All were in favor.**

**G. Pare moved to adjourn at 12:37pm. G. Klanchesser seconded the motion and all were in favor.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Martha S. Roy

Town Administrator