

**TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

JANUARY 14, 2021 7:00 PM

REMOTE MEETING

Approved March 29, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Chairman Daniel V. Smith, Vice Chairman Jeff Raab, Roger Cady, Joe Lamattina, Michael LaBranche, Eric Wigode, Robert Ortins, Matt Evangelista, John Halsey, School Board Rep Michael Kenison, Town Council Rep Zachary Dumont

GUESTS VIA ZOOM: Town Manager Steve Fournier, School Superintendent Dr. Susan Givens, School Business Administrator Janna Mellon,

AGENDA

Chairman Dan Smith welcomed everyone to the January 14, 2021 Newmarket Municipal Budget Committee Remote Meeting and called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Smith said tonight's meeting is to hold Public Hearings on Warrant Articles put forth by the Town and the School District.

Notice for Remote Meetings: *As Chairman of the Municipal Budget Committee, due to the Covid-19 coronavirus crisis, and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to executive order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically.*

Please Note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously through the meeting which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, this is to confirm that we are:

(A) Providing access to the meeting by telephone with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means. We are utilizing the Zoom platform for this electronic meeting and all members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through Zoom platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing area code 301-715-8597 and meeting ID 92637129750;

(B) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting via Zoom, instructions provided on the Town of Newmarket Website at: www.newmarketnh.gov.

(C) There are provisions made to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access: please call 602-292-1221.

(D) We will adjourn the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting. In the event this happens, the meeting will be rescheduled. Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call vote.

Roll Call Attendance: Roger Cady-present/alone, Jeff Raab-present/alone, Michael LaBranche-present/alone, Joe Lamattina-present/alone, Robert Ortins-present/alone, Michael Kenison-present/alone, John Halsey-present/alone, Zachary Dumont-present/alone, Eric Wigode-present/alone, Matt Evangelista-present/alone, Dan Smith-present/alone

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of the Minutes of the Municipal Budget Committee Meeting of January 4, 2021

Mr. Cady made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Municipal Budget Committee Meeting of January 4, 2021, which was seconded by Councilor Dumont.

Corrections/Changes: Line 112 correct “North Hampton” to *Newmarket*; line 162 change “recreate” to *create*; line 176 remove “as” before *for*.

Roll Call Vote: Roger Cady-aye, Jeff Raab-aye, Michael LaBranche-aye, Joe Lamattina-aye, Robert Ortins-aye, Michael Kenison-aye, John Halsey-aye, Zachary Dumont-aye, Eric Wigode-aye, Matt Evangelista-aye, Dan Smith-aye

The motion was approved, as amended above, by a vote of 11-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing – Town Warrant Article – New Road Construction Bond

Town Warrant Article T-2 for New Road Construction Bond

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,000,000 (gross budget) for the purpose of design and construction of Stormwater improvements along New Road, including roadway repairs as requested, that will qualify the Town for Federal and State funds, authorize the issuance of bonds or notes in accordance with provisions in the Municipal Finance Act (NH RSA 33:1) as amended in the amount of up to \$1,000,000 and further to authorize the Town to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof, and further to authorize the Town to apply for, obtain, and accept Federal, State, or other aid, grants, or other funds if any of which may be available for said project may reduce the amount to be financed with bonds and notes and to participate in State Review Fund (SRF) RSA 486:14 established for this purpose and to allow the Town to expend such monies as become available and to authorize the Town to take any other action or pass any other vote relative thereto. It is anticipated the Town will receive \$100,000 in principal forgiveness from SRF Loan Program, and it is the intention of the Town that the bond or note repayment shall be paid for by general taxation. Recommended by Town Council 7-0, 2/3 vote required.

Town Manager Fournier said there are issues with drainage in the New Road area and it has been in the CIP plan for a number of years. He said he received a notice from the State Revolving Loan Fund that Newmarket would be eligible for a loan of 10% forgiveness for this project. Water main replacement is already being done in the area and money would be saved doing both projects at once. The project may also be eligible for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); received a \$500,000 CDBG for another project.

Chairman Smith opened the hearing for Public Comment on *Town Warrant Article T-2* at 7:14 pm.

Public Comments: Nicole Benson of 12 Mockingbird Lane thanked the Town Council and the Town Manager for their forward thinking to back this project.

Town Manager Fournier said with regard to financing, for the first year they are looking for a level principal loan with tax impact of 6 cents; stays at 6 cents every year and level principal will save approximately \$20,000 there as well.

Chairman Smith closed Public Comment *on Town Warrant Article T-2* at 7:16 pm and opened the floor for Budget Committee member comments.

Committee Comments: Mr. Cady asked Town Manager Fournier to clarify that SRF will absolutely be used as part of the financing even if a Block Grant is received. Town Manager Fournier said yes as the money has to be borrowed first then get reimbursement from the Block Grant. Mr. Halsey asked about project contracting, and Town Manager Fournier said they only have an estimate from the Town Engineer and will go out to bid as in any project.

Mr. Kenison made a motion to approve *Town Warrant Article T-2*, which was seconded by Vice-Chair Raab.

Roll Call Vote: Roger Cady-aye, Jeff Raab-aye, Michael LaBranche-aye, Joe Lamattina-aye, Robert Ortins-aye, Michael Kenison-aye, John Halsey-aye, Zachary Dumont-aye, Eric Wigode-aye, Matt Evangelista-aye, Dan Smith-aye

The motion was approved by a vote of 11-0

Public Hearing – School District Warrants

School District Warrant Article #4

To see if the Town will vote to establish a School Improvement Capital Reserve Fund under provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of improving, expanding, maintaining, renovating, furnishing, and equipping School buildings and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,000 to be placed in this fund. This sum to come from the June 30, 2021 Fund Balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021. Further to name Newmarket School Board as agents to expend from said fund (no amount to be raised from taxation) (majority vote required). The School Board has recommended this Article 5-0.

Superintendent Givens said this is a Warrant Article that will allow us to set aside some of the money from last year's Warrant Article that they will not be able to execute until this Fiscal Year ends, specifically for furniture. When COVID hit furniture had to be moved out to social distance, they were not able to move into new spaces at the Junior-Senior High School, and the money set aside went into their Operating Budget and needs to be encumbered before the end of the year. This will allow us to set aside the amount for furniture in a Trust Fund until the pandemic is over.

Chairman Smith opened the Public Hearing on *School District Warrant Article #4* to Public Comment at 7:26 pm.

Chairman Smith closed the Public Hearing on *School District Warrant Article #4* to Public Comment at 7:26 pm.

January 14, 2021

Mr. Cady made a motion to accept *School District Warrant Article #4* as written for the sum of \$60,000, which was seconded by Councilor Dumont.

Committee Comments: Mr. Lamattina asked if there is a reason the Warrant does not say to appropriate “up to” a certain amount. Business Administrator Mellon said according to the DRA the “up to” an amount is only if you do not have remaining funds to fund the Article. She also explained to Mr. Evangelista that Capital Reserve Funds can only be funded by a vote of the legislative body, which is the voters, and they cannot increase the amount allocated from Fund Balance.

Roll Call Vote: Roger Cady-aye, Jeff Raab-aye, Michael LaBranche-aye, Joe Lamattina-aye, Robert Ortins-aye, Michael Kenison-aye, John Halsey-aye, Zachary Dumont-aye, Eric Wigode-aye, Matt Evangelista-aye, Dan Smith-aye

The motion was approved by a vote of 11-0

Chairman Smith closed the Public Hearing on *School District Warrant Article #4* and opened the Public Hearing on *School District Warrant Article #5*.

School District Warrant Article #5

To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000 to be added to the Repair & Maintenance of School Facilities Expendable Trust Fund, previously established to support the Elementary School Playground Renovation Project. This sum to come from the June 30, 2021 Fund Balance available for transfer on July 1, 2021 (no amount to be raised from taxation) (majority vote required). The School Board recommends this appropriation by a vote of 5-0.

Superintendent Givens said this Warrant Article relates to a project initially brought forward by the PTA at the Elementary School; a lot of work is needed on the existing playground which was not part of the building construction project. The playground is 18 years old, needs updates for ADA accessibility. and one play structure needs complete replacement; in addition, they will resurface and line the basketball court and move pre-school playground back to corner area with new layout. The total estimated cost is \$102,000 (with outdoor classrooms) and is part of their CIP plan. Business Administrator Mellon said this warrant is identical to the one put forward last year.

Chairman Smith opened the Public Hearing to Public Comment on *School District Warrant Article #5* at 7:38 pm.

Public Comment: Nicole Benson of Mockingbird Lane said this will be a huge benefit to all children in Newmarket and said she supports this Warrant Article and is thankful the fund was set up.

Chairman Smith closed the Public Hearing to Public Comment on *School District Warrant Article #5* at 7:39 pm.

Mr. Lamattina made a motion that the Budget Committee accept School District Warrant Article #5 for \$50,000, which was seconded by Councilor Dumont.

Committee Comments: Mr. LaBranche said he received a list of the School Trust Funds and this fund is not listed. Superintendent Givens said the money for that is in the School Repair & Maintenance Trust Fund, and the purpose is adequate to house the money. Mr. LaBranche asked if trust funds go through

Trustees of Trust Funds or the School Board for expenditures. Superintendent Givens said when the fund was set up the School Board was set up as Trustees to approve expenditures.

Business Administrator Mellon explained that Trustees are the ones who invest the money and manage the account, and the expenders are the ones who put forward the paperwork and requests to withdraw but do not have access to the account. Vice-Chair Raab asked if the \$40,000 raised by the PTA is in this fund or held separately; Superintendent Givens said the PTA is holding those funds.

Roll Call Vote: Roger Cady-aye, Jeff Raab-aye, Michael LaBranche-aye, Joe Lamattina-aye, Robert Ortins-aye, Michael Kenison-aye, John Halsey-aye, Zachary Dumont-aye, Eric Wigode-aye, Matt Evangelista-aye, Dan Smith-aye

The motion was approved by a vote of 11-0

Chairman Smith closed the Public Hearing on *School District Warrant Article #5*.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Lamattina asked about the 2 upcoming virtual deliberative sessions that are scheduled. Chairman Smith said ordinarily the Budget Committee sits on one side of the Moderator with the School Board on the other side, and they are available to respond to public comments and questions. He said he is not sure how the new format works and will get in touch with the Town Manager.

Superintendent Givens said her understanding is that the School Board at the first meeting on January 27, 2021 will review the Warrant Articles and explain them; the Town will do the same. She said she assumes they would all be present. At the subsequent meeting on February 2, 2021 each board will read the comments/questions and have a discussion, and that absolutely the Budget Committee would be present for that.

Chairman Smith said the other part is that voters are able to make motions from the floor and the Budget Committee is essential to that process. Vice-Chair Raab said the special announcement email from the Town says at the 2nd meeting there could be adjustments made by the Town Council, and the Budget Committee would have to be present to re-approve. Councilor Dumont said motions were to be submitted in writing after the first session, but the Town Manager has not explained how the Council would approve those, vote against, or enact those changes.

Mr. Cady said his reading is that the first session is informational after which people can submit questions and amendments; the second meeting would be deliberation of the requests by Town Council with School Board, answer questions and address required changes, deliberate, and make a decision at which point the Budget Committee would have to meet to ratify any adjustments. Chairman Smith said he would verify with Town Manager Fournier.

Mr. Cady asked about the regularly scheduled meeting for January. Chairman Smith said in the past they have not done a regular Budget Committee meeting in January and they already have the meeting on February 2, 2021. He said the meeting of new committee members will be held at the end of March as new officers are sworn in on April 6, 2021. Councilor Dumont pointed out that the filing period for those looking to serve on a board or committee is January 20th to 28th.

NEXT MEETING: TBD

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Cady made a motion to adjourn the meeting which was seconded by Councilor Dumont.

Roll Call Vote: Jeff Raab-aye, Roger Cady-aye, Michael LaBranche-aye, Joe Lamattina-aye, Michael Kenison-aye, Robert Ortins-aye, John Halsey-aye, Eric Wigode-aye, Matt Evangelista-aye, Zachary Dumont-aye, Dan Smith-aye

The motion was approved by a vote of 11-0 and Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary