

**TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING**

**JANUARY 8, 2024**

**TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM**

***Approved January 22, 2024***

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Christopher Wolfe, Vice-Chair Richard Lesavoy, Brian Rowley, Scott Foster, Brian Hickey, Danielle Honan, School Board Rep Dan Smith, Town Council Rep Brian Ward; Ned Carpenter (on Zoom)

ABSENT: Tim Chiou, Justin Looser

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Steve Fournier, School Superintendent Todd Allen

Chairman Chris Wolfe welcomed everyone to the January 8, 2024 Municipal Budget Committee Public Hearing and called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. He said Ned Carpenter will be joining the meeting on Zoom due to illness and all votes taken tonight will be Roll Call.

All Budget Committee members agreed to allow Ned Carpenter to participate in the Meeting via Zoom.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

Chairman Wolfe opened Public Forum; seeing no members of public present, Chairman Wolfe closed the Public Forum at 6:34 pm.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Public Hearing on Town FY2025 Operating Budget**

Chairman Wolfe opened the Public Hearing on the Town FY2025 Budget; no Public Comments or questions from Board members.

**Motion:** Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the Town FY2025 Operating Budget as presented by the Town Manager in the amount of \$17,687,830 and for the Budget Committee to recommend; **Seconded:** Mr. Ward; **Roll Call Vote:** Scott Foster-aye, Brian Rowley-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Richard Lesavoy-aye, Brian Hickey-aye, Ned Carpenter-aye, Christopher Wolfe-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye; **Motion** passes: 9-0 to recommend.

Chairman Wolfe closed the Public Hearing for the Town FY2025 Operating Budget.

**Town FY2025 Warrant Articles**

Town Manager Steve Fournier said the Town has 3 Warrant Articles that need recommendation or non-

recommendation of the Municipal Budget Committee (warrant articles are not yet numbered):

First Warrant (unnumbered): To contribute \$300,000 to replace copper and lead piping that goes to homes for the Water System, which will be applied towards a loan from State Revolving Loan Fund with \$210,000 forgiveness, raising \$90,000 through taxation; if passed no impact on tax rate but impact on water rates; 2/3 vote required, recommended by Town Council 7-0 and needs BC recommendation.

**Motion:** Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the first unnumbered Warrant Article as presented;  
**Seconded:** Mr. Rowley;

Discussion: Mr. Foster asked if this was a mandatory thing the Town needed to do, and Town Manager Fournier said it was necessary, work to be done by Wright-Pierce Engineers. Chairman Wolfe read the article in full which was in compliance with the Municipal Finance Act and authorizes the Town to issue or negotiate such bonds or notes to determine rate of interest, term of payment, and take such other action as may be necessary.

**Roll Call Vote:** Scott Foster-aye, Brian Rowley-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Richard Lesavoy-aye, Brian Hickey-aye, Ned Carpenter-aye, Christopher Wolfe-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye; **Motion** passes 9-0 to recommend.

Second Warrant (unnumbered): To see if the Town will raise and appropriate \$73,500 for purpose of Stormwater Planning to identify pollution within Moonlight Brook Watershed, and according to State and Federal guidelines to issue bonds or notes; 2/3 vote required, contingent upon approval of Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan which may include up to 100% loan forgiveness; no impact on tax rate; recommended by Town Council 7-0.

**Motion:** Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the second unnumbered Warrant Article as presented;  
**Seconded:** Mr. Rowley;

Discussion: Mr. Foster asked if the Town was aware of any pollution now. Town Manager Fournier said there are concerns with higher levels of bacteria at outfall near Schanda Park, and this will identify any sources along the brook. He said there could be a leach field or leak in the town's system getting into the brook.

**Roll Call Vote:** Scott Foster-aye, Brian Rowley-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Richard Lesavoy-aye, Brian Hickey-aye, Ned Carpenter-aye, Christopher Wolfe-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye; **Motion** passes: 9-0 to recommend.

Third Warrant (unnumbered): To see if the Town will raise and appropriate \$1,750,000 for the purpose of rehabilitation of the Sewer Collection System and issue serial bonds or notes not to exceed the total amount; Town will receive \$612,000 in principal forgiveness from the State Revolving Loan Fund; requires 2/3 vote; impact on sewer rate not on tax rate; recommended by Town Council 7-0; anticipating a 20-year Bond at 2.8% interest.

Town Manager Fournier said the Town received \$100,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act to evaluate the Wastewater Collection System, they examined 50,000 linear ft by camera of gravity sewer main inflow and infiltration, and identified \$1.75 Million in repairs; leaks are causing more water to be put in the system. Vice-Chair Lesavoy said he did not recall any of these as part of the CIP process and asked for the

rationale. Town Manager Fournier said they were able to bump something up after getting the grant and determined there was a significant amount of inflow. Vice-Chair Lesavoy asked if Capital Reserves could be used and Town Manager Fournier said they could not in case of a catastrophic event.

**Motion:** Mr. Ward made a motion to approve and recommend the third unnumbered Warrant Article;  
**Seconded:** Ms. Honan;

Discussion: Mr. Foster said this would amount to about \$80,000/year for 20 years and it would have been nice to have gotten this earlier for a more in-depth discussion, but the work needs to be done and it was good to have the \$612,000 forgiveness. Vice-Chair Lesavoy asked the impact and Town Manager Fournier said it will go on the Ballot with no Budget Committee recommendation. Vice-Chair Lesavoy said there was also a sizeable Fund Balance and Town Manger Fournier said they try not to use that in case of an emergency.

Chairman Wolfe said there could have been a little more visibility; Town Manger Fournier said it was brought up at the beginning when the Budget was presented to the Budget Committee a few months ago and he did not hear anything back.

**Roll Call Vote:** Scott Foster-aye, Brian Rowley-aye, Danielle Honan-nay, Richard Lesavoy-nay, Brian Hickey-nay, Ned Carpenter-nay, Christopher Wolfe-nay, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye; **Motion** fails: 5-4 to not recommend.

Town Manager Fournier said there will be a Public Hearing by the Town Council on the 2 warrants over \$100,000 next Tuesday evening and recommended the Budget Committee attend.

Chairman Wolfe closed the Town portion of the Public Hearing.

#### **Public Hearing on School District FY2025 Budget**

Chairman Wolfe opened the school portion of the Public Hearing, all members in favor, and asked if there was anyone who wished to speak.

**Toni Weinstein** of 275 Ash Swamp Road said she was surprised that there was no information on the School Budget available for the public tonight and said she could find no online information about the School Budget.

School Superintendent Todd Allen said the School Budget was presented over two meetings ago to the Budget Committee; Chaiman Wolfe said there was ample opportunity for public involvement as there have been essentially 3 meetings on each budget.

#### **School District FY2025 Warrant Articles**

School Superintendent Allen said there were 6 Warrant Articles with the first article being the election of officers.

Warrant Article 2: To raise and appropriate the School FY2025 Budget of \$27,772,282 with Default Budget \$27,066,373 and a Net Budget of \$26,947,200 with \$835,061 not raised by taxes. He said there was a shift of the tax burden due to State Aid, \$566,474 increase in property taxes, and a \$460,126 loss in Adequacy Aid with 3.9% of the burden on taxpayers to raise and appropriate a Budget of \$26,652,112 and Default \$25,943,895; offset by estimated Federal Grant Revenues of \$700,000 and approximately \$400,000 in

local State revenues; amount of \$1,121,062 will not be raised by taxes.

**Motion:** Mr. Ward made a motion to accept School Warrant Article 2 as presented; **Seconded:** Mr. Rowley; **Roll Call Vote:** Scott Foster-aye, Brian Rowley-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Richard Lesavoy-aye, Brian Hickey-aye, Ned Carpenter-aye, Christopher Wolfe-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye; **Motion** passes: 9-0 to recommend.

Warrant Article 3: Vote to approve cost items included in CBA between School Board and Newmarket support staff, to raise and appropriate \$200,000 to be added to the School Improvement Capital Reserve Fund previously established; recommended by School Board 5-0; in accordance with School District CIP Plan of 2024-2043, approved by School Board September 7, 2023 with estimated \$0.20 impact on taxes.

**Motion:** Mr. Ward made a motion to approve School Warrant Article 3 as presented; **Seconded:** Mr. Hickey; **Roll Call Vote:** Scott Foster-aye, Brian Rowley-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Richard Lesavoy-aye, Brian Hickey-aye, Ned Carpenter-aye, Christopher Wolfe-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye; **Motion** passes: 9-0 to recommend.

Warrant Article 4: To raise and appropriate \$75,000 to be added to Insurance & Benefits Expendable Trust, previously established for purposes of unanticipated insurances and employee benefits expenses and to further authorize use of this amount from the June 30, 2024 Fund Balance available on July 1, 2024, not to be raised from taxation; recommended by School Board 5-0; tax impact zero.

**Motion:** Mr. Rowley made a motion to approve School Warrant Article 4 as presented; **Seconded:** Ms. Honan;

Discussion: Superintendent Allen said this fund was created last year with \$50,000 looking at potential cost spikes in capital expenses, employee benefits, and unanticipated Special Education costs. Last year CPR came in \$50,000 higher than estimated with rates going down this year. This brings the Trust to \$125,000 for future protection. Ms. Honan asked how the School Board managed to not have costs go up this year compared to other districts. Superintendent Allen said this District is in a different pool which was less utilized and Medical Insurance only went up 3.7%.

**Roll Call Vote:** Scott Foster-aye, Brian Rowley-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Richard Lesavoy-aye, Brian Hickey-aye, Ned Carpenter-aye, Christopher Wolfe-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye; **Motion** passes: 9-0 to recommend.

Warrant Article 5: To raise and appropriate \$50,000 to establish a Special Education Trust Fund; use of Fund Balance; no amount to be raised by taxation; School Board recommended 5-0.

**Motion:** Vice-Chair Lesavoy made a motion to approve School Warrant Article 5 as presented; **Seconded:** Mr. Hickey;

Superintendent Allen provided background on Special Education costs with Out-of-District Placement costing as high as \$300,000/student; if a student moves into the district requiring a significant expense the school would not have been able to budget for it and would need to be able to absorb that expense. Current Fund Balance is \$300,000; goal is \$400,000 to-450,000 to cover high-end placement.

**Roll Call Vote:** Scott Foster-aye, Brian Rowley-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Richard Lesavoy-aye, Brian Hickey-

aye, Ned Carpenter-aye, Christopher Wolfe-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye; **Motion** passes: 9-0 to recommend.

**Amy Tilton**, School Board Member, asked that Article 1 be read into the record for the public.

Chairman Wolfe read School Board Warrant Article 1 in full to elect the following officers: One School District Moderator (1-yr term); One School District Clerk (1-yr term), One School District Treasurer (1-yr term), One School Board Member (3-year term), One School Board Member (3-year term).

First Session to be held Saturday, February 3, 2024 at Jr-Sr High School; Second Session to vote on Warrant Articles 1-5 to be conducted by official ballot held in conjunction with Newmarket Town Voting on Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at Newmarket Town Hall Auditorium, 7:00 am-7:00 pm.

Chairman Wolfe closed the Public Hearing for the School Board.

## **MEETING MINUTES**

### **Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2023**

Corrections: Mr. Foster questioned line 42 corrected to: *Town currently has \$2,535,033 Fund Balance or 7.26% of Gross Town Appropriations*; Line 72 corrected to: *Mr. Foster asked the number of Water and Sewer users*; Line 101: *Local difference is \$300,000, but we are estimating \$400,000 in Grant Revenue*.

Ms. Honan had a question on the December 11 minutes which was noted by the Recording Secretary and the minutes clarified.

**Motion:** Mr. Rowley made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 18, 2023 as amended; **Seconded:** Mr. Hickey; **Roll Call Vote:** Scott Foster-aye, Brian Rowley-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Richard Lesavoy-abstain, Brian Hickey-aye, Ned Carpenter-aye, Christopher Wolfe-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye; **Motion** passes: 8-0 with 1 abstention.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

**Next Meeting:** January 22, 2024 – Budget Committee to revisit Town Sewer Warrant Article.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Honan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Ward, all in favor 9-0..

Chairman Wolfe adjourned the meeting at 7:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary