

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

DECEMBER 14, 2020 7:00 PM

REMOTE MEETING

Approved January 4, 2021

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

GUESTS VIA ZOOM: Town Manager Steve Fournier

AGENDA

Chairman Dan Smith welcomed everyone to the December 14, 2020 Newmarket Municipal Budget Committee Remote Town Public Hearing and called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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 312-626-6799 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.

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of the Minutes of the Municipal Budget Committee Meeting of December 7, 2020

Chairman Smith said they would take up the meeting minutes of December 7, 2020 at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Review Town Manager Responses to Committee Member Questions

Chairman Smith asked if there were any follow-up questions or clarifications from Budget Committee Members for Town Manager Steve Fournier.

Mr. Evangelista said the School did not plan on COVID-19 going forward and asked if the Town was planning to use that type of issue. He said Comcast is going to increase their billing from a limited amount to fixed. Town Manager Fournier said he had not heard about issues with bandwidth on the Town side and if so, he would go out to bid for other available services and check the Comcast Franchise Agreement. Mr. Evangelista said he heard that on January 1st Comcast is going to limit the amount of data for live streaming and start billing for data.

Public Hearing FY2021/2022 Town Operating Budget

Chairman Smith opened the Public Hearing on the Town FY2021/2022 Operating Budget.

Public Comment

Councilor Weinstein of 275 Ash Swamp Road said our Town Manager and Department Heads worked really hard to propose fiscally responsible budgets, and said she is in complete support of this Budget and strongly recommends its approval.

Nicole Benson of 12 Mockingbird Lane expressed her support for the Town's Budget this year and said she was happy about how everyone worked together to be fiscally responsible.

Chairman Smith closed the Public Hearing at 7:12 pm.

Chairman Smith asked for a motion to approve the FY2021/2022 Town Operating Budget of \$13,729,433, a second to the motion, and would then open the floor for discussion, debate, and any amendments.

Joe Lamattina made a motion to approve the Town FY2021/2022 Operating Budget in the amount of \$13,729,433 as presented by the Town Manager, which was seconded by Mr. Wigode.

Mr. Cady asked that the motion be amended to read “as presented by the Town Council” which was seconded by Chairman Smith. Town Manager Fournier said if the persons who made and seconded the motions agree they do not have to vote twice; all were in agreement.

Committee Deliberations and Vote

Mr. Lamattina asked if the Town was still anticipating a tax rate of \$6.51. Town Manager Fournier said that is the last number we have; no changes have been made. Chairman Smith said this is his 6th year on the Budget Committee and this is one of the larger increases he has seen the Town come in for. He said he thinks this is because the Town has been very spendthrift in managing their finances over these 6 years, and increases were expected for a time, and though he would like the Budget to be lower, he would support it for that reason.

Mr. LaBranche said there is an anticipated Fund Balance use for this Budget and asked if the tax rate could potentially be lowered. Town Manager Fournier said it could always be lowered in a worst-case scenario and said the value of the community is not set until fall, but they use the April 1st value. He said they did see a reduction in value of property during the pandemic, but the market is still booming which could affect valuation. He said he would probably not use any more Fund Balance and did not want to artificially deflate the tax rate.

Motion: To approve the Town FY2021/2022 Operating Budget in the amount of \$13,729,433 as presented by the Town Council.

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

Motion approved by the Municipal Budget Committee with a unanimous vote of 11-0

Town Manager Fournier said if the Council approves going forward with a Bond for New Road, he will be coming back to the Budget Committee sometime in January for a Public Hearing on that as well. Chairman Smith said they could take that up at the School District Public Hearing on January 4, 2021; if not ready by that date the Budget Committee has a reserve date the last Thursday before warrants need to be finalized.

Town Manager Fournier stated that the Deliberative Session this year will not look the same. He said there would be 2 meetings at which the governing bodies could take in and amend their Warrant before it goes on the Ballot. He said the first Ballot question will be “do you accept the results of this type of meeting” and goes from there. He said details are still being worked out and they received guidance from the Attorney General’s Office last week. He said they are also working with the School District.

Chairman Smith said if the Warrant is not ready by January 4th (School Public Hearing) the Budget Committee has a reserve date on January 14th, 2 days after the deadline for Petition Warrant Articles and one business day before the deadline for Public Hearings.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Cady asked if the Town proposes a New Road Bond Issue Warrant, is New Road in any of the Road Improvement plans in the \$250,000 for this year’s Budget. Town Manager Fournier said they paved half of New Road a few years ago knowing the water lines on the other half would need to be addressed. He said if the Bonds pass, they would be doing the entire water project and repaving at the same time.

NEXT MEETING: January 4, 2021 – Public Hearing FY2021/2022 School District Operating Budget.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The motion was approved by a vote of 11-0 and Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary