

**Town of Newmarket
Town Council Budget Workshop
Saturday, October 23, 2021, at 9:00 AM
Town Hall Auditorium
Meeting Minutes**

Approved November 3, 2021

Councilors in Attendance: Council Chair Toni Weinstein, Council Vice-chair Helen Sanders, Councilor Jon Kiper, Councilor Megan Brabec, Councilor Scott Blackstone, Councilor Katanna Conley and Councilor Brian Ward.

Staff present: Town Manager Stephen Fournier and Finance Director William Tappan.

Chair Weinstein convened the meeting at 9:00 AM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the bottom line of each budget will be announced, and the Councilors can ask questions of the Department Heads.

Police Department:

The proposed budget for the Police Department is \$1,943,103., a 10% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that increases to the budget include a \$44,532. Increase in part-time salaries and a new Parking Enforcement Officer position.

Chief Jordan explained that the training and overtime budget line increased due to the mandated training the officers now have to take. The overtime budget line increased because those officers in training have to have their shift covered.

Chief Jordan said the increase in the equipment/lease budget line is due to the body camera program they plan to start and added software they need to help track officers.

Town Manager Fournier said that the Parking Enforcement Officer is linked to the Parking Commission. He said the first step is to address parking enforcement and the second step would be to look at putting in parking meters downtown. He also explained that police vehicles will be part of the budget going forward; they are not considered a capital improvement.

There were no changes made to the Police Department budget.

Recreation Department:

The proposed budget for the Recreation Department is \$243,528., a 6% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the increase is mainly due to salaries.

Rec Director Gigandet explained that the decrease in the salary line is from the new position of site supervisor. It was removed from salaries and added to the revolving fund.

The Revolving Fund is set up, so the revenues generated go directly back to the operations of the Rec Department. The Revolving Fund budget is \$478,556.; a 30% increase.

Rec Director Gigandet said that the projects she will be working on next year are the skate park (\$185,000 to \$250,000) and the Beech Street Ext. Building. The current skate park will be removed, and a new skate park built. The Beech Street Ext. Building will be renovated and will house a wellness center – health, mind, and body. There is talk of expanding the Splash Pad at some point.

The biggest obstacle the Department faces is staffing. Town Manager Fournier said that we will conduct a town-wide salary survey to see where we stand in the market; the Library will be included in that study.

There were no changes made to the Recreation Department budget.

Town Council

There is a zero % increase in FY2023 budget.

Town Manager

The proposed budget for the Town Manager's Department is \$241,328., a 6% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the increase is mainly due to salaries. The training and communications budget lines have also increased. The communication line is the phone system.

Chair Weinstein asked if there was a plan in place for increased training and staff development. Town Manager Fournier said a lot of the training facilities are not operating due to Covid-19. He said that he is keeping an eye on it.

There were no changes made to the Town Manager budget

Finance Department

The proposed budget for the Finance Department is \$296,565., a 2% increase.

Finance Director Tappan explained that the increase is mainly due to salaries. Hours were added to the part-time position. Money was moved from the Finance Salary line to the H/R Salary line due to the promotion of an employee to Human Resource Director.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

The proposed budget for the TC/TXC Department is \$217,765., a 2% decrease.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the budget decrease is due to the low number of elections for the year and a full-time position was changed to part-time.

There were no changes made to the Town Clerk/Tax Collector budget.

Code Enforcement

The proposed budget for Code Enforcement is \$103,540., a 25% increase.

Town Manager Fournier said the increase is due to changing the part-time Code Enforcement Officer position to full-time.

There were no changes made to the Code Enforcement budget.

Direct Assistance

The proposed budget for the Welfare Department is \$38,950., a 1% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the budget used to be over \$100,000. We have been leveraging our non-profits to help provide services over the years. The Town acts as overseers of the poor and provide services from rental assistance to burial assistance. There is a wide range of services provided.

There were no changes made to the Direct Assistance budget.

Assessing

The proposed budget for the Assessing Department is \$86,253., an 8% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the increase is due to the software that we use. The software fee is an annual fee. Assessing is a contracted service with the town. They do quarterly property updates for each year for the town wide revaluation done every 5 years.

There were no changes made to the Assessing budget.

Legal

The proposed budget for Legal is \$90,000., 0 % increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that we did go over budget for legal due to issues with the MS-4 with lawsuits that needed to be covered. We do have the law firm on retainer which saves the town money.

Chair Weinstein mentioned that we haven't gone out to bid for legal services for a while. Town Manager Fournier agreed and said they can look into that.

There were no changes made to the legal budget.

Planning Department

The proposed budget for Planning is \$155,496., a 0.4% increase.

Community Development Director Diane Hardy presented the proposed budget. She explained that the part-time budget line increased because they would like to hire a recording secretary to take the minutes of the Planning and Zoning Board meetings, which was a recommendation made in the MRI study. There are decreases in the advertising and postage budget lines.

Councilor Kiper asked if the Planning Board was going to resume the impact fee study. CDD Hardy explained that the Planning Board voted to move forward with replacing the water and wastewater impact fees with a system development charge which would be more flexible. Wright Pierce Engineering has been hired to develop those fees. If the Council accepts any changes to the impact fees changes will need

to be made to those specific zoning ordinances. Town Manager Fournier said that the Council has to wait until the water portion of the study is done.

There were no changes made to the Planning Department budget.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

The proposed budget for the CIP is \$519,100., a 4% increase.

The CIP Committee recommended a budget of \$1.3M. The Town Manager cut it to \$519,000. Town Manager Fournier explained that the CIP Committee's due diligence is to recommend the projects that need to be done in the year and it is the Town Manager's due diligence to come up with a figure we can afford. These figures are contributions to Capital Reserve Funds so we can complete the projects once the money is in the fund.

CDD Hardy said that the Committee received 49 proposals from the Town Department Heads and one request from the school.

CIP Chair Russell Simon said that he has been on the Committee for years and what used to be a six-month process is now a 3 ½ week process. He thanked the Committee members and especially Diane Hardy for her hard work.

Discussion ensued regarding Capital Reserve Funds and Debt. Many of the larger communities do not use Capital Reserve Funds and Newmarket is heading in that direction.

Town Manager Fournier said he will be putting out an RFP for a facility study this year so we can figure out where we are going to be in the next 10 years.

Council Chair Weinstein said that she is hoping we can use some of the American Rescue Plan Act funds to support some of our Capital Improvement Projects.

There were no changes made to the CIP budget.

Library

The proposed budget for the Library is \$390,246., a 17% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the Newmarket Library is unique. It was originally established by the Mills; not the Town. Once the Mills ceased to exist it was turned over to the Select Board, now the Town Council, that is the reason why the Town Council appoints the Library Trustees instead of the positions being elected positions.

Librarian Kerry Cronin introduced herself. She explained the proposed increases to the Library budget:

- Increase evening hours
- Add a part-time technology position
- Expand programming
- Participate in off-site activities
- 4% salary increase for staff

Some of the programming they are considering are, Genealogy, more children programming, pop-up library off-site, Author talks, work with the Historical Society.

Librarian Cronin mentioned that they will be working on accessibility at the front entrance to the Library before the winter months.

There were no changes made to the Library budget.

Water Department

The proposed budget for the Water Department is \$1,680,221., a 58% increase.

Environmental Services Director Sean Greig explained the increase is due to the debt services for all the projects going on to improve the water system and supply. There are increases in electricity and chemicals due to the new treatment facility that will treat arsenic and manganese.

There were no changes made to the Water Department budget.

Wastewater Department

The proposed budget for the Wastewater Department is \$2,444,542., a 0% increase.

Environmental Services Director Greig said that the slight decrease is due to retiring debt service (Creighton Street Pump Station).

Increases in the budget include equipment, the new thickener equipment that is a 7-year lease; contracted services, added testing; increase in the cost of chemicals; sludge removal and capital reserve.

Town Manager Fournier said this budget has no effect on the tax rate; it is supported by rate payers.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the Town prevailed in the eminent domain case to allow the town to have an easement over the property to access the well.

ESD Greig said that we will go through the appeals process and they will determine the value of the property. It will be paid for out of the rural development funding.

ESD Greig said the South Main St. and Bay Road projects are nearly finished. South Main St. will be ground and paved in the spring and Bay Road will be paved with topcoat in the spring. They started the Moody Point water tie-in project yesterday and should take two weeks to start feeding them water. Remaining projects are the Tucker Well, Bennett/Sewell Improvements and New Road. He will be going out to bid in December; it will be a 5-week bidding period and approvals will be sought from the Council in February 2022.

There were no changes made to the Wastewater Department budget.

Fire Department

The proposed budget for the Fire Department is \$539,103, a 7% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the main increase is in part-time salaries. He explained that in the past there was issues with response times and that has been rectified by scheduling employees on an “on-call” basis on the weekends. Newmarket is fortunate to have a volunteer department.

Fire Chief Malasky said the biggest challenge is that the department is getting much busier.

There were no changes made to the Fire Department budget.

Public Works Department

The proposed budget for the Public Works Department is \$644,626., a 32% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the main increase is in full-time salaries. The new town engineer position will be added to this budget. The engineer will be licensed and will review plans and roads, do capital projects as it relates to water & sewer, work on stormwater. To help offset the increase there will be reductions in engineering costs and the removal of the Facilities Director position. The other major increases are sidewalk construction and the price of salt.

There were no changes made to the Public Works Department budget.

Streetlights

The proposed budget for Street lights is 33,000., a 27% decrease.

Town Manager Fournier said that the decrease is due to the streetlight replacement loan being paid off.

There were no changes made to the streetlights budget.

Roadway/Sidewalks

The proposed budget for Roadway/Sidewalks is \$491,800., an 8% increase.

Chair Weinstein asked if there was a sidewalk construction plan. DPW Director Malasky said there is a plan but basically, they are constructing sidewalks alongside projects that involve tearing up roads. The next sidewalk construct will be New Road when the Water Department will have the road torn up.

There were no changes made to Roadway/Sidewalk budget.

Bridges/Guardrails/Signs

The proposed budget for Bridges is \$10,000., a 100% increase.

The budget will be used mostly for guardrails.

Building and Grounds

The proposed budget for Building & Grounds is \$667,665., a 16% decrease.

Town Manager Fournier explained that the main decrease is due to eliminating the Facilities Director position. Other reductions are a result of energy improvements done the last few years.

DPW Director Malasky said that he is having a hard time getting parts. His new dump/plow trucks are built but they are waiting for a transmission part that won't be available until the first of the year.

Solid Waste

The proposed budget for Solid Waste is \$838,593., a 12% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that this is a special revenue fund. The increase is mainly due to the fact that there is no market for recycling. He said that we have to go out to bid for a solid waste contract but if we can get a good rate and stay where we are he will probably agree to a 1-year extension to our existing contract. He said other impacts are that facilities are closing or not expanding.

Chair Weinstein asked about Hazardous Waste Day.

DPW Director Malasky said that Newmarket is a large enough community now to start offering Hazardous Waste Day every year instead of every other year. He's hoping to have the next one in spring 2022.

There were no changes made to the Solid Waste budget.

Conservation Commission

The proposed budget for the Conservation Commission is \$4,185., a 44% increase.

Councilor Brabec said that the Conservation Commission would like a \$350.00 increase in the Dues and Subscriptions budget line. Town Manager Fournier said that there is no need to change the budget for that minimal amount, and there will be no problem covering it.

There were no changes made to the Conservation Commission budget.

Economic Development

The proposed budget for Economic Development is \$30,000., a 0% increase.

Town Manager Fournier said the money is used for studies to redevelop the three gateways to town. They have been meeting with stakeholders in those areas. There will be a presentation November 3rd right before the Council meeting at 6:00 PM in the Auditorium.

There were no changes made to the Economic Development budget.

Debt Services

The proposed budget for Debt Service is \$190,000., a 5% decrease.

Town Manager Fournier explained that a contract has been completed this year resulting in the reduction.

There were no changes made to the Debt Services budget.

Interest on Debt

The proposed budget is \$66,369., a 6% decrease.

There were no changes made to Interest on Debt budget.

IT

The proposed budget for IT is \$166,803., a 2% decrease.

Town Manager Fournier said that we contract out the IT services and it is working well.

Council Kiper asked about cyber security.

Finance Director Tappan said that we have changed out all the switch technology, installed a new server and changed the firewall device.

There were no changes made to the IT budget.

Channel 13

The proposed budget for Channel 13 is \$80,618., a 63% increase.

Town Manager Fournier said the main increase is in the full-time budget line. The Director position will go from part-time to full-time. The Director will be responsible for providing information to the public through social media, press releases and newsletters.

There were no changes made to Channel 13 budget.

Insurance

The proposed budget for Insurance is \$110,157., a 1% increase.

There were no changes made to the Insurance budget.

Emergency Management

The proposed budget for Emergency Management is 2,250., a 0% increase.

There were no changes to the Emergency Management budget.

Grants

The proposed budget for Grants is \$55,000., a 0% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that this line is used for community organizations that provide services to us such as the NYAA, Coast Bus etc.

There were no changes made to the Grants budget.

Social Services Grants

The proposed budget for Social Services Grants is \$50,580., a 1% increase.

Town Manager Fourier explained that each organization has to fill out an extensive application annually to qualify for funds.

There were no changes made to the Social Services Grants budget.

Patriotic Purposes

The proposed budget for Patriotic Purposes is \$2,500., a 0% increase.

Town Manager Fournier explained that this line is used for the Memorial Day Parade.

Town Manager Fournier said that there were no changes to the proposed FY2023 Budget totaling \$15,165,541.00. He said that he will prepare a Resolution to accept the budget for the November 3, 2021, Council Meeting.

Chair Weinstein adjourned the Budget Workshop meeting at 11:50 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy V. Chase
Recording Secretary