

Adopted

Town of New Boston Selectmen's Meeting January 15, 2019

<u>PRESENT:</u>	Joe Constance	Selectman	
	Rodney Towne	Selectman	
	Christine Quirk	Selectman	Absent
	Peter Flynn	Town Administrator	

Finance Director Elisa Fitzgerald, Selectmen's Assistant Laura Bernard, NH Representative Kat McGhee, Town Clerk Kim Colbert, Deputy Town Clerk Cathy Strausbaugh, Road Agent Dick Perusse, Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett, Fire Wards Wayne Blassberg, Scott Hunter, Dick Moody, Cliff Plourde, Firefighters Brandon Merron, Derek Danis, Emmett Plourde, John Jones, Brian Dubreuil, Greg St. Armand, Rich Little, Finance Committee members Bill Gould, Brandy Mitroff, Roch Larochelle, and Bill Schmidt, School Board Chairman Wendy Lambert, Recreation Director Mike Sindoni, Fire Inspectors Eric Dubowik and Mike Boyle, Fire Chief Dan MacDonald, Police Chief Jim Brace, Kim DiPietro, Mary Constance, Mark Suennen, Hannah Phelps, Donald Riedel, Willard Dodge, Susan Carr, Mary Koon, Cyndie Wilson, Terry Harkins-Maguire, Dan Garrity, Bill McFadden, Karen Scott, David Litwinovich and Kaleb Jacob of the public were present for all or part of the meeting.

A. CALL TO ORDER: A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order by Joe Constance at 6:15PM beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance. He then reviewed the rules for the Public Hearing.

Item 1: PUBLIC HEARING RE: BOND for Construction of Fire Station

Fire Station Warrant Article - \$2,800,000

Joe called the Public Hearing to order at 6:15 PM under the provisions of RSA 32:5(i).

Fire Chief Dan MacDonald gave an overview of the fire station proposal with a Powerpoint Presentation. The proposed station would be at the land next to the post office. The slides contained a fire station site plan and exterior and interior design. It is not an engineered design as funds are not yet available for engineering. He reviewed benefits of the proposed station including space for all current apparatus, growth potential on right side of bay area, office layout on left side, better communication and flow of resources. Fire Chief and Fire Inspectors do not have office space in the current station.

The Fire Wards presented ten year and twenty year bond schedules to begin in 2020. The amount has increased to \$2.8 million since the original \$2.5 million quote was received three years ago. At that time the Fire Wards were advised to expect an increase each year. In 2018 grants were available that could have offset some costs but that time has passed. Construction and bond costs have increased. The town was told to expect a \$75,000-100,000 annual increase in construction costs if the current proposal does not pass. The Fire Wards presented the terms of the bond choices. The first payment is the highest and decreases each year as the principal

and interest decrease. The Fire Wards showed a bond charts for each choice showing the impact on the tax rate.

Dan noted each town department is its own business with leadership structure, employees and a budget and all are service providers. The amount of services needed cannot be controlled as the town grows and services have to be broadened, but the town can control quality, provide high quality in a cost effective manner. The state conducted a study last year and found New Boston has the lowest cost Fire Department considering the services it provides. The New Boston Fire Department conducted a study this year that showed the Department has received \$2,536,000 from grants since 2007 and the town has spent \$2,565,854 on the Fire Department since 2007. The Department as a business is doing its part, providing the best services possible without going to a per diem or full time employee structure, consists of excellent members that respond to calls and spend hours away from their families. The New Boston Fire Department has 58 members (consisting of New Boston residents' neighbors doing everything they can, 4,000 hours responding to calls in 2018 away from their families) compared to 16 members per department in surrounding towns. The New Boston Fire Department has its own ambulance service and does not have to contract that out, enabling the department to provide faster response and quality of service to these calls. The leadership structure is similar to other departments but the New Boston Fire Department has more volunteers (who provide these services in addition to their other jobs) than other departments. It is the biggest department in New Boston. Members also spent 3,100 hours training in 2018.

Finance Committee member Bill Schmidt asked if it will be the voters choice of a ten or twenty year bond. He is concerned that twenty years is too long. He also wants to be sure there will be no prepayment penalties.

The Selectmen said they will determine which bond schedule to bring before voters then hear voter preference at the Deliberative Session and change at that time if necessary. A five year bond option was not researched as that would be cost prohibitive.

Kaleb Jacob of Fraser Drive was present and asked about the Explanation of the Warrant Article as it says "The Fire Wards are requesting." He said he has attended every recent Fire Wards meeting and this was not discussed.

Dan said the Fire Wards voted to approve this request and it is the same design they have been working on for three years. The Fire Wards approved the proposition of this Warrant Article.

Bill McFadden of Dane Road noted the town is growing and the Fire Department may become a full time service. He asked if there is a plan to add sleeping quarters to the proposed station if that happens.

Dan said every town will eventually become full time. Towns are growing and call volume will exceed volunteer capabilities. When the annual number of calls reaches 600/700 calls per year the Department will have to consider alternatives according to what has happened in departments in surrounding towns. He said the New Boston Fire Department has great innovative programs, including the recruit program, which saves money for New Boston taxpayers. The recruits receive training they need while covering New Boston for free. Other towns don't do that. 20%

of New Boston Fire Department members are from other towns. The Department is able to attract and retain personnel from surrounding towns. The Department has continued the tradition of past Fire Chiefs to remain volunteer or call as long as possible. Residents have asked Dan why the Department needs a new fire station if it is doing so well. It is because in business if the business doesn't care for the needs of the employees the system will break. The proposed fire station is a modular design with expansion capabilities at both ends. The original design had more elements but the Department heard from residents and members that some elements were not needed so it was redesigned to take some elements out and expand later when needed. An expansion will cause increased costs later but there will be some savings as the expansion has already been designed.

Bill Schmidt asked if there was any initiative to have a separate Article to begin a separate account to save money toward a fire station/increased rates while waiting for fire station approval such as a CRF considered by CIP Committee.

Rodney noted the CIP Committee discussed this. It was not funded this year but is on the CIP Schedule.

Dan noted when a CRF is opened the first \$75,000 each year goes toward increased construction costs incurred each year.

Donald Riedel of 24 Bog Brook Road asked if the Fire Department tried to raise funds as the library did to build. He noted the New Boston Beacon reported maintenance was done at the station. He noted he has noticed there is siding maintenance not done at the station but they have a big screen TV. He said the building maintenance is needed to protect the equipment.

Dan noted members respond to calls as their first priority. They still do some maintenance at the station at no charge to taxpayers. They used to do more but this was removed from member duties to decrease their sacrifice of family and free time. The members need to be invested in and cared for to keep them. If they are forced to do maintenance it may cause them to leave the department. The building maintenance was moved to the budget as it is the taxpayer responsibility to care for. The siding Don asked about is not done as the money for that repair is not in the budget. The TV is for training.

Karen Scott of Dane Road asked if members receive stipends for calls.

Dan said they do not get a stipend, they get a wage. In approximately 1981 the town decided volunteers should receive some compensation, defined to be minimum wage for time responding to calls not including training. In 2012 the Department Accountant said the Fair Labor Standards Act changed and the Department changed from volunteer to call at that time.

Karen asked if the Department is call or volunteer.

Dan said call. Members volunteer for a call department. Most members have other jobs; their career is not based on fire service.

Mark Suennen of Twin Bridge Road asked how the bond calculations will change based on the town revaluation planned for 2021.

The Selectmen said that cannot be known now, it depends on the number of houses and valuation at that time.

Mark asked what would happen to the bond calculations if the valuation increased 10%.

The Selectmen said it would stay the same.

Joe closed the first Public Hearing at 6:45 PM.

Item 2: PUBLIC HEARING RE: 2019 Municipal Budget

Presentation of entire 2019 Budget consisting of Operating Budget and Warrant Articles - (Handouts provided for the audience)

Joe called the Public Hearing to order at 6:45 PM under the provisions of RSA 32:5(i).

Article 1 is for election of public officials.

Planning Board Articles are expected. The Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing for these. Current Article numbers may change depending on the number of Planning Board Articles.

Some Articles are on the Warrant in case the budget fails and would be null and void if the operating budget passes. If both fail, the town won't have a budget for those items. This is caused by RSA 40:13 effective as of August 24, 2018 that changes how contracted items are calculated in the default budget. If these Articles don't pass the contracted amount would have to be taken from other budget lines that are not delegated for that purpose.

Department Managers and the Town Administrator are present tonight to fully answer any questions.

Joe read all Warrant Articles and Explanations aloud.

Article 8: This is for the Operating Budget.

Discussion:

The proposed Operating Budget is \$5,292,657. The default budget is \$428,702 less at \$4,863,955. The town is an SB2 town which requires the town to vote on large operating budgets instead of on individual department budget items. A budget breakdown by department will be available at the Deliberative Session. The increase in the tax rate not including Warrant Articles is approximately 64 cents per thousand. The increase in the tax rate with all Warrant Articles approved is approximately 89 cents per thousand. This would bring the town tax rate to \$6.12/thousand not including any revenues. The largest increases are salaries and some contractual items.

Article 9: Fire Department reorganization.

Discussion:

The Selectmen noted the Fire Wards presented this proposal to them at their December 17 meeting after the Fire Wards voted 5-1 for the change. The Selectmen asked Fire Ward Scott Hunter to speak to this who said the effort of the Fire Wards doesn't hold the value it once did and it is an intermediate level of government.

Kaleb Jacob asked how the Selectmen feel about taking on the added responsibility.

Joe noted the Selectmen feel it is time to make this change, surrounding towns do this and it is a smoother working model. The dissenting Fire Ward also spoke at the Selectmen's meeting. This is a procedure followed in New Boston since the 1800's and Joe thanked the Fire Wards for their over a century of service.

Rodney noted he served as a Fire Ward in the 1970's. Fire service and the role of the Fire Wards has changed extensively. This change is proposed and he supports it.

Article 10: Fire Department Pumper Truck.

Discussion: None.

Article 11: Fire Department Vehicle CRF.

Discussion: None.

Article 12: Change of Purpose of Fire Department Vehicle CRF.

Discussion: None.

Article 13: Fire Department Exhaust System.

Discussion:

Dan Garrity of Mill Street asked if the Fire Department is liable for anyone who gets sick working out of the fire station because of that issue or any like it.

The Selectmen said yes and it would be handled under workers compensation.

Scott Hunter suggested the sentence at the end of the Explanation for this Article be added to the Article language.

The Selectmen and Town Administrator agreed that suggestion is appropriate.

Article 14: Fire Department Dispatch Contract.

Discussion:

This Article is submitted to protect the budget to cover additional costs of dispatch services that will increase 300% and the contract is nonnegotiable. This is an Article on the Warrant in case the budget fails and would be null and void if the operating budget passes. If both fail, the town won't have a budget for this item. This is caused by RSA 40:13 effective as of August 24, 2018 that changes how contracted items are calculated in the default budget. This service was put to bid three years ago with a \$48,000 quote from the two major dispatch centers in the area. The previous contact amount with Goffstown dispatch was unrealistic. New Boston had no control over this contract increase. It was set by Goffstown.

Article 15: Police Department Dispatch Contract.

Discussion:

This Article is submitted to protect the budget to cover additional costs of dispatch services that will increase by a very high percentage and the contract is nonnegotiable. This is an Article on the Warrant in case the budget fails and would be null and void if the operating budget passes. If both fail, the town won't have a budget for this item. This is caused by RSA 40:13 effective as of August 24, 2018 that changes how contracted items are calculated in the default budget. This service was put to bid three years ago. The previous contact amount with Goffstown dispatch was unrealistic. New Boston had no control over this contract increase. It was set by Goffstown.

Article 16: Highway Department Truck CRF.

Discussion:

The Explanation should say "two 10-wheel"

Article 17: Highway Department Heavy Equipment CRF.

Discussion: None.

Article 18: Town Bridge Repair/Replacement CRF.

Discussion: None.

Article 19: Doherty Lane Bridge Repair.

Discussion:

CIP Committee member Brandy Mitroff noted she and CIP Committee Chairman Fred Hayes discussed this at the January 10 Finance Committee meeting. She said Doherty Lane Bridge needs to be replaced for safety reasons but the Tucker Mill Bridge is not on the CIP Schedule until 2023 so not an emergency yet. Fred asked and Brandy strongly suggests pulling this Article for 2019 to allow the CIP Committee to work it into the Schedule this year. This was not brought up at the CIP Committee meetings under bridge repair and not included in the bridge repair list. The Highway Block Grant money planned for this project will not lapse if it is not

spent in 2019. The town's share of the Tucker Mill Bridge is \$160,000 and this will need to be available in the CRF.

Joe noted Fred suggested an option of taking the money from the Bridge Repair CRF as an amendment to the Warrant Article to be made anytime before or at the Deliberative Session.

Road Agent Dick Perusse was present and noted the town wants to make sure the 20% it is responsible for to be eligible for state bridge aid is available before needed in 2023. The town would approach NH DOT for that purpose in 2021 dependent upon the 20% available. The Tucker Mill Bridge is currently a two culvert pipe that will become a bridge costing \$1.3million-1.5 million to replace.

Brandy noted there is over \$250,000 currently in the Bridge Repair CRF originally planned for the Bedford Road culvert from this fund in 2019 but not included as a 2019 Warrant Article. She and Fred are requesting waiting a year for an opportunity to increase the CRF funding to protect funding for the Tucker Mill Bridge and to do the Doherty Lane Bridge from the same fund. Joe noted one option above but they also suggested taking the money from fund balance after the CIP Committee reviews it in 2019 to see if both bridges could be covered by the CRF.

Rodney noted there is no advantage to delay as the project will cost the same \$130,000 to taxpayers if done this year or another year.

Brandy said the Bridge Repair Schedule and CRF should have included the Doherty Lane Bridge. She also noted there is the option to take the money from fund balance due to the safety issue as was done with the communication tower.

Joe asked Dick about timeliness, why it is important to do the Doherty Lane Bridge this year.

Dick said it can be done during construction season in 2019 and construction costs are expected to be less in 2019 than 2020. If the appropriation is not received in 2020, when would it be received? What if the Tucker Mill Bridge fails? Those residents would then not be able to be serviced at that time.

Finance Committee Chairman Bill Gould noted the Finance Committee voted 2-5 against this Article for the reasons Brandy mentioned above.

Rodney asked if the Article should stay the same or change to fund balance funding.

Joe suggested leaving it as is until the Deliberative Session.

Kaleb Jacob asked how much is in the fund balance unreserved account.

Peter noted there is approximately \$1,657,000.

Brandy asked what is the state recommendation for the balance of this account.

Peter noted the state recommends a range of 5% to 17% of which we retained a healthy 9.27%, which is over \$200,000 over an average 8% retained amount.

Joe noted it is not bad to have more than the state recommended minimum balance as this account can be used to stabilize the tax rate in years needed.

Brandy said the town has had two default budget years and should try to protect the operating budget and CRFs that have kept the tax rate stable. This is a new Warrant Article that never came up at CIP and came up at the end of the Finance Committee sessions with some misunderstandings. The project is definitely needed but should be done in a way that protects the proposed operating budget and Warrant Articles. She also suggested encumbering surplus from 2018 for the Doherty Lane Bridge.

The Selectmen said there was not enough left from the 2018 surplus to cover the Doherty Lane Bridge project.

Article 20: Highway Department Salt Shed.

Discussion: None.

Article 21: Change of Purpose of Transfer Station Machinery, Equipment and Facility Expendable Trust.

Discussion:

Kaleb Jacob asked what the language “to name the Selectmen as agents” means.

The Selectmen noted this is language used in other town funds that means the Department Manager has to request Selectmen approval to spend the money.

Article 22: Transfer Station Solid Waste Disposal and Trucking.

Discussion: None.

Article 23: Revaluation CRF.

Discussion: None.

Article 24: IT Service Contract.

Discussion: None.

Article 25: Police Department Portable Radios.

Discussion:

Karen Scott of Dane Road noted this was brought up at the January 10 Finance Committee meeting as an important safety item the town should have. She asked if it could be encumbered from the 2018 budget.

Peter noted the 2018 surplus balance is currently approximately \$60,000 with 2018 bills still coming in. Once the balance lowers to approximately \$50,000 the Selectmen use it to lower the tax rate for the upcoming year. Auditors also review the previous year's budget each mid-year and \$50,000 may be needed for adjustments.

Rodney noted the town never drains the surplus to \$0 and this item was never requested or considered.

Article 26: Police Department Server.

Discussion:

Brandy Mitroff noted the Finance Committee never received an explanation of this Article and asked if it could be done now.

The Selectmen noted new state requirements for Police Departments because the server to be used more causing the New Boston Police Department to need for an updated server.

The Selectmen asked Police Chief James Brace to explain this. He noted if the server fails the Police Department would lose its database and police operations are contingent on a functioning server. The current server replaced the previous server six years ago and that replacement was long overdue. This is the appropriate time for replacement. The server is very important to the department and the town does not want to delay.

Brandy asked why this is a Warrant Article and not included in the proposed Operating Budget.

Jim said the town decided to present this as a Warrant Article to be consistent with the town's Warrant Article for a server.

Brandy asked why this server was not paid from 2018 encumbered funds as the town's server was.

Jim noted the Police Department 2018 budget did not have enough surpluses to cover it and the department did not know the town was going to purchase its server from surplus.

John Jones of Scobie Road asked if the town plans to purchase the server outright or if a lease was considered to continually refresh technology for firmware and hardware.

Jim said the server was proposed and the town did not have an opportunity to research if a lease would be more cost effective. The department formerly leased cruisers but discovered that was not cost effective and the department now purchases cruisers outright.

Peter noted the town considered a lease for its server but was advised not to by legal counsel.

Selectmen's Assistant Laura Bernard noted the town considered an HP lease but learned it was not recommended for a server for towns as it is expensive.

Jim noted a lease would cost twice as much for IT overall for frequent switching of equipment and is not expected to be a better option.

Article 27: Police Department Cruiser.

Discussion: None.

Article 28: Senior Citizen Transportation.

Discussion:

The Selectmen have been discussing a community transportation service for senior citizens. There is funding available from the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program for elderly and disabled transportation. This federal funding is distributed by the NH DOT to the Regional Coordinating Councils around NH who then select the services that will utilize the funding and contract with providers for the services. The FTA Section 5310 program has existed for many years and it is highly likely the federal government will continue to provide funding support for elderly and disabled transportation services in the future. NH selects Section 5310 projects every two years. The service would be available five hours per day one day per week by reservation with preference for medical appointments. An experienced coordinator handles scheduling.

Peter reported new information was learned this morning. The Article has been reworded with updated numbers that are expected to remain the same as long as the federal government continues to send money to the state for this purpose.

Brandy Mitroff noted she recognizes the need and asked that the Article make clear that if funding approved from the fund balance, in 2020 it would be on the Warrant again or included in the operating budget.

The Selectmen agreed that will be added to the Operating Budget. However, they have not yet determined where the money will come from in the future. They may determine that by the Deliberative Session. They will consider fund balance, or Recreation Department or Welfare portions of the operating budget.

The Public Hearing closed at 7:43 PM.

In other business the Board announced that the State form known as the DTB. (Default Budget) was completed and was forwarded to the DRA as prescribed by statute. A public announcement was required.

Prepared by Maralyn Segien

Next Scheduled Meeting: Town Hall Conference Room on January 28, 2019 (9:00 AM)
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Handicap Access available