

**New Hartford Board of Finance
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 10, 2020**

Present: Chairman Regina Wexler, Members: Dan Charest, Kerry Guilfoyle, Reggie Smith, Steve Tuxbury;
Alternates: Bart Baxter, Lou Helt and Paul LeClair, First Selectman Dan Jerram, Treasurer Gordon Ross and Recording Secretary Penny Miller

Others Present: Superintendent of Schools Brian Murphy, BOE Chair Tim Goff, BOE members: Tom Buzzi and Tim Klepps, Highway Superintendent Dave Helt and members of the public Aulay Carlson, Jay Bailey and David Rosengren

Chairman Wexler opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Seating of Alternates: Lou Helt was seated for Ben Witte.

Adoption and/or Revision of Agenda

There were no suggestions to revise the agenda, Chairman Wexler adopted the agenda as printed.

Approval of Minutes: February 11, 2020 Regular Meeting

Motion by Smith to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2020 Regular Meeting; seconded by Helt.

Discussion: Chairman Wexler asked the Recording Secretary to make sure that included with the minutes of the February 11, 2020, Aulay Carlson's letter presented at that meeting but not read, and any correspondence to the board be posted with those minutes so that the public is able to see it at the Town Clerk's Office. The meeting attachments will be included with the minutes sent to the Board of Finance.

Ms. Guilfoyle asked if the questions submitted ahead of the February 11th meeting were automatically submitted with the minutes. Ms. Wexler asked about attaching and including the questions emailed to the First Selectman with the minutes.

Mr. Smith and Ms. Helt withdrew their original motion.

Member Witte arrived at 7:04 pm and Ms. Helt was unseated.

Motion by Smith to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2020 Regular Meeting as submitted with the questions submitted to the First Selectman for the Asset Evaluation Team to discuss with the Board of Finance. Seconded by Guilfoyle.

Unanimous

The minutes were passed as amended.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Aulay Carlson, 455 West Hill Road, read a letter regarding the New Hartford Public Schools, the addition of 2 support staff, a Social Worker and an additional full-time nurse. A copy of that letter and the one submitted, but not read, at the February 11th meeting, are available at the Town Clerk's Office.

Mr. Carlson also read his letter regarding the sale of the water system. He compared the water system which is not funded by the town to the library which is. A copy of that letter is available at the Town Clerk's Office.

Selectman David Rosengren, 495 Town Hill Road, said he has attended all the meetings regarding the sale of the Water & Sewer proposed sale. When the plant was built, he was opposed to the plan to put the lion's share of capital, capital

expenses and debt service onto the users. He said at one of the recent informational meetings someone said if we expand into Pine Meadow, that their rates would go up to almost \$1600 where they currently pay only \$100. The person said why not tax them. He said the presentation is inaccurate and incomplete. As a result, it is deceptive and misleading. He feels that the sale makes no relief to the users. It won't be reducing rates. Mr. Rosengren asked if the Board of Finance would allow him 20 minutes at their next meeting to do a presentation about the sale.

Jay Bailey, 575 Main Street, said that if people had questions that they attend the meetings where the board goes over each line item very carefully. Also, it is obvious that the WPCA is bankrupt and can't maintain the system.

Board of Education Chairman Tim Goff & Superintendent Brian Murphy
Proposed Five Year Capital Plan

BOE Chair Tim Goff went through the CAPEX plan and expenses. The Capital Plan and accompanying photos are available at the Town Clerk's Office.

1. Technology. The plan is to purchase 5 Promethean Boards, 55 Chrome Books (for the 4th graders) and Chrome Book Carts. They are working on getting 1-to-1 devices for all the students. Once all students have a device, they will start replacing the older ones. Ms. Wexler asked if it was an issue with children bringing home their Chromebooks and not have Wi-Fi access. Mr. Murphy said that hasn't been an issue. Ms. Wexler asked if once they all had Chromebook would they move to remote learning. Mr. Goff said with the influx of Google Classroom there will be the ability to do distance learning. With the current situation of the Corona Virus – Governor Lamont recommended that distance learning not be done now but instead close the schools. But the ability is there for a student who is home to receive their assignments and do distance learning. Mr. Tuxbury said would this technology help to improve the test scores. Mr. Goff said that all the testing is done electronically. We are finding that some of the test scores are improving because the computer is not foreign to the student. The students are getting use to taking a test using a computer.
2. Playground Equipment. Project Playground has raised about \$80,000. The school's contribution to this is \$20,000. The playground will be ADA compliant.
3. Sidewalk Removal and Equipment. Removal of existing sidewalk at Bakerville School and put in concrete curbing.
4. Painting. Classrooms at Bakerville & New Hartford Elementary and the rotunda at Bakerville will be painted. Some of the original drop ceilings will be replaced along with some sheetrock repair at both elementary schools. Mr. Tuxbury asked what was the expectation of maintaining the 3 schools. Mr. Goff said that at this time the expectation is they would maintain the 3 schools. No matter what the schools are used for they will need to be maintained. At this time the school board hasn't discussed any changes to our configuration or consolidation.
5. Security upgrades. Superintendent Murphy met with resident state trooper Rafael Figueiral, Fire Chief Bob Diorio and the school administrators regarding school security upgrades. Trooper Figueiral was recommended that all classroom doors at the 3 schools will be replaced because of the amount of glass in them. With their configuration they can't be retrofitted. Replacing 9 – 10 doors per year will cost around \$9,000 and it will take a few years to replace them all. The cost of each door is \$900. With the current configuration if the school was in lockdown, the perpetrator could break the glass, reach in and open up the door. The new door will have the door handle on the opposite of where the doors opens plus the glass is narrow enough so that you couldn't put your hand / arm in. The new doors will not only bring us up to code but they are fire rated for 90 minutes. Recessed panic buttons will also be added to each classroom to improve our reaction time. If the panic buttons are pushed a message will go immediately to LCD (Litchfield County Dispatch), fire department with a text message to the local police. The panic button doesn't distinguish as to what the emergency is. This does not replace the pull boxes for fire.
6. Tile in Room 17. This classroom at Antolini had an issued with water run-off from the hill. It came into the classroom and bubbled up the tile. The water issue was fixed with drains and the floor was remediated. This needs to be fixed for safety issues.
7. Fencing. On the left-hand side of the playground at Antolini a fence will be installed to keep the balls from going into the woods.

Special Emergency Capital Request

Superintendent Murphy said testing was completed on the underground storage tanks at all 3 schools and there were issues identified for remediation. A big part was at Bakerville to replace the electronic panel which informs them if there is water seeping into the area and at New Hartford Elementary. The hand-pumps and valves were also recommended for replacement for a total cost of \$40,000. He is requesting from the Board of Finance re-allocation of already approved funds. Supt. Murphy asked for \$25,000 of that money to help defray the cost of completing the work of the underground storage tanks. The additional \$15,000 will be covered by the Board of Education. The money in this fund has accumulated over the years from jobs completed under budget. Ms. Wexler asked for a breakdown from last year's project and running total of where the surplus comes from over the years.

Motion: by Guilfoyle to move \$25,000 from the Unexpended Board of Education Capital Funds Reserve for the Storage Tank Repair at all 3 schools. Seconded by Smith.

Unanimous

Regional #7 Budget: discussion and possible action

Chairman Wexler asked the board if after review of the budget packages from Region 7 did they have any comments for Region 7 to address at the Budget Meeting on Saturday. The board asked for more detail on the STEM teacher that was hired after the budget was approved last year, Superintendent's salary. When asked when they thought the Region 7 budget would go down as student enrollment decreases the answer was not this year. This was the same answer that Supt. Murphy and Tim Goff gave for the local BOE.

First Selectman Reports

The proposed five-year capital plan is available for at the Town Clerk's Office. Along with the 5-year Capital Plan First Selectman Jerram included the Capital Project list and where those projects for 2019-2020 are in the process.

The Capital Projects are as follows:

1. Large plow truck – financed for 2 years.
2. Technology – recurring – used every year. They are currently in the middle of a server upgrade.
3. Town Hall Equipment – General upkeep of Town Hall. The back-parking area will be redone and an electric charging station will be added. Patrons will need to use a credit card to use it.
4. Town Hall Equipment – Equipment upgrades and furniture replacement. The First Selectman's Office was recently repainted and re-carpeted. This is not the only area in the Town Hall that hasn't been done in 20 years. The Sessions Conference Room will also be repainted & re-carpeted.
5. Recreation Department – General park improvements. This includes some electrical upgrade at Brodie, repairs to the roofs and painting, and floor re-finishing at Berkshire Hall.
6. Garage Equipment – replacement of the 2002 John Deere Road Side Mower. Ms. Guilfoyle said in the CAPEX meeting there was discussion about doing a lease for this item. Mr. Jerram said the recommendation of the Selectman not to do this.
7. Downtown Improvements – sidewalks and lighting. There is a pending application for lighting with Conn DOT.
8. Brodie Septic – removal of the cesspools and installation of modular bathroom(s). There is one existing septic system at Berkshire Hall. There is a split septic with the Scout cabin and the next one. This is something that isn't done anymore. There are 5 other buildings that connect to cesspools. These cesspools are not compliant. The pipes run underground in many directions with a low pitch into the woods ending at the cesspools. The goal for the 5 buildings is to remove the bathrooms and put in a tank type system that will be a step-up system with no septic system. It will be pumped out. Final numbers should be available before the budget is finished.

On the Capital Project list 2019-2020 – Approved in Process (available at the Town Clerk's Office), Item 9 – Garage Equipment – \$165,000 was budgeted for replacement of 1st Front Loader 444H. This item came in under budget at

\$142,815 leaving about \$23,000 dormant in that line. A request has come from the Highway Department to remove Truck 12 – a F250 truck (used for sign repairs, etc.) with a used van that is outfitted with racks and will be used for sign repairs.

The Wash Bay @ WWTP - the Selectmen will prepare a separate recommendation for presentation to the BOF for consideration.

Discussion and Possible Action on Capital Transfers

Mr. Jerram said previously he had said that the Windows 10 upgrade did not mesh with the Vision Appraisal Software for the assessors. The first payment of \$6,750 was taken care of at a previous BOF meeting. There are 3 dormant lines - the Senior Van came in \$2,775 under budget, the foreman's pick-up truck purchased last year came in \$541.01 under budget, when the pavilion was built that came in \$3,012.88 under budget for a total of \$6,828.89. He asked the BOF to reallocate that money for the 2nd payment of the Vision Appraisal Software.

Motion by Smith to approve reallocation of up to \$3512.88 from the Pavilion Capital line, \$541.01 from the Foreman Truck Line and \$2,775.00 from the Senior Van Capital Line for the 2nd payment of the Vision Appraisal Software Upgrade. Seconded by Witte.

Unanimous

Motion by Guilfoyle to move \$22,608.56 from the Garage Equipment, first front loader replacement, not to exceed \$22,608.56 on a slightly used van. Seconded by Smith.

Unanimous

Shared with the BOF and available at the Town Clerk's Office a report on the New Hartford DPW Trucks & Equipment and their miles/hours.

AET Information Update

There is one last of three information presentation to be held on March 19th at Antolini School. The AET hasn't met to reconcile all the questions asked so far. Frequently asked questions will be developed following the 3rd public presentation and responses will be written and then added to the website.

Other reports

Bookkeeper Revenue & Expenditures Fiscal YTD and Previous Fiscal YTD

Mr. Jerram reported that all departments remain on track. In the last 2 years no payment has been received for the Special Ed Cost. Recently a check was received for \$22,772.00. The Tax Collection Rate as of 3/11/2020 is 97.04%. The one line in the Highway Department is over due to some personnel changes. There was one retirement in early January 2020 in the Highway Department and that person has not been replaced yet.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Ross shared the Connecticut Short Term Investment Fund summary with the board. A copy is available at the Town Clerk's Office.

Discussion and possible action re: FY 2020-2021 Budget Timeline

The budget timeline on-line shows that the BOE would be starting at 9:30 AM when they actually will present at 9:05 AM.

Communications and Other Items Presented to Board

The Beekley Library and West Hill communications will be filed with the minutes.

Other Business

Mr. Charest asked about Mr. Rosengren's request. Chairman Wexler will ask him to forward his materials to the board before the meeting. Request that his comments be geared to the financial aspects of the potential sale.

Adjournment

Motion by Smith to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 pm. Seconded by Guilfoyle.

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Miller
Recording Secretary

Attachments filed with the town clerk:

3 Letters from Aulay Carlson

New Hartford Public School Capital Plan

BOE Capital Savings

BOE Capital Plan Update List

Underground Storage Tank Quotes – John C. Digertt, Inc.

Town Capital Project List – 5 years

Town Capital Expenditures

New Hartford DPW Trucks & Equipment 1/02/20

Bookkeeper's Report

State of CT Short Term Investment Fund

Beekley Library Budget Request

West Hill Budget Request