

**New Hartford Board of Finance
Regular Meeting
October 10, 2023 @ 7 pm**

Present Chairperson Kerry Guilfoyle and Paul LeClair (on Zoom), Ryan Bingham, Dan Charest, Lou Helt, Charlie Neale, Ben Witte and Recording Secretary Penny Miller

Also present: First Selectman Dan Jerram and John Russo

Absent Jack Casey and Allen Voghel

Chairperson Kerry Guilfoyle called the meeting to order at 6:59 pm.

Seating of alternates None

Approval of Minutes: Special Meeting September 19th 2023

Ms. Guilfoyle said that in the September 19th minutes – the total enrollment of students should read 455 students.

Motion by Ms. Helt to approve the September 19th, 2023 minutes as amended. Second by Mr. Charest.

Aye: Guilfoyle, Helt, Witte, Neale, LeClair; Abstained Charest

Motion passed

Communication and Other Items Presented to Board

Other than the budget calendar which will be discussed later in this meeting and the correction to the number of enrolled students, no other communication was received.

Opportunity for Public Comment

John Russo, 33 Vickers Road, commented that we are spending a lot on education & roads. The budget is getting squeezed. Our town needs some help to make it grow and make it a little more prosperous.

Ms. Guilfoyle said we will be starting the new budget season soon and it is always a challenge to budget our limited resources around.

Mr. Witte said that the local school is considering adding a School Resource Officer. It is said to be no cost to the current budget. If this position is approved, then in the next year's budget it will show up as a new line item in the budget. Mr. Jerram said the BOE had asked that it be an advisory question on the Municipal Election ballot. The Town Attorney recommended against it as there hadn't been any public information hearings. Mr. Russo commented that he felt it was manipulative how it was done with the budget. Some money was set aside so we could vote on

it. And people would vote on it if you say you have the money. We are taking from Peter to pay Paul. He feels it is very deceptive.

Ms. Guilfoyle noted that a post card has recently been sent out to the townspeople notifying them of two upcoming information sessions. One in late October and the other in mid-November. Mr. Jerram commented that this town has been conditioned to receive information about their budget education in April. That's when everyone prepares and attends the budget meetings. When you get out of sequence people say "we went to the meetings. voted on a budget and now the budget is being changed." Mr. Roraback, town attorney, said when you do these major initiatives you should stay in the protocol you have always done. Mr. Jerram has sent a letter to the BOE summing up Attorney Roraback's recommendations.

2024/2025 Budget Calendar

Ms. Guilfoyle presented the 2024/2025 budget calendar. In prior years the way the calendar fell there were enough meetings. This wasn't the case last year. She would like to add in another meeting to this calendar between the hearing and the budget workshop. The budget workshop will be held on Saturday, March 16th with the regular BOF meeting on March 19th. On April 2nd the Public Budget Hearing will be held in the Senior Center.

Reports

Bookkeeper: Revenue & Expenditures Fiscal YTD

Treasurer's Report – None

First Selectman's Report

Mr. Jerram said that the water and sewer sale has been completed. We no longer own our systems. Their check has been cashed and we put \$8,000,000 in the bank. We had 4 existing loans with the USDA and they have taken the Waste Water Treatment Plant funds of \$2.25 million. The other 3 smaller loans remain in our account. A new STIF investment account has been created for \$5 million and it is collecting interest of 5½ %. That will go toward the initiatives for the subsidies.

The DPW truck purchased with ARPA funds has come in. It came in over at \$1947.38. This new truck has a wing plow on it. There were overages of \$3,200. We have a dormant dump truck capital account that can be used to zero out that account.

Motion by Ms. Helt that we utilize the dormant Dump Truck Account in Capital Reserve for \$3322.38 overage for the new ARPA truck and wing plow. Second by Mr. Neale.

Unanimous

Ms. Guilfoyle left and asked Ms. Helt to continue on as Chair. Ryan Bingham was seated for Ms. Guilfoyle.

An offer has been extended to Kim Ahrens to replace Annie Witte when she retires. She used to work for King & King and had audited our town. She worked previously doing payroll in Winsted. As there aren't additional funds in the line item – it will be going over.

The Board of Selectmen have created an advanced position of Executive Assistant for Christine Hayward. She has been the Administrative Assistant. She will now have the authority to act in the event that Dan should become incapacitated and will have Purchase Order signing authority for budgeted expenses up to \$100,000. Mr. Jerram said that while her salary hasn't changed, she was provided a fringe benefit to serve as additional compensation. The employee costs (premium share) toward the health care plan will be waived.

Ms. Helt asked that if she retired would a new employee be hired to fill that new position. Mr. Jerram said that it would be very hard to find someone to do this. In most cases you would need to be in the Administrative Position for 5 years minimum. Future first selectman may not want to have someone in this position. And a new person may not want that responsibility.

Mr. Neale asked why there was a big payment in Health Insurance this month. Mr. Jerram said that it was two payments.

Motion by Mr. Bingham to adjourn at 7:45 pm. Second by Mr. Charest.

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted, Penny Miller, Recording Secretary