

**New Hartford Board of Finance  
Regular Meeting (Hybrid-via Zoom)  
February 13, 2024 @ 7:00 pm**

**Present** Chairperson Kerry Guilfoyle, Members: Dan Charest, Lou Helt, Paul LeClair, Charlie Neale, Ben Witte; Alternates: Ryan Bingham, Steve Seltzer.

**Also present** First Selectman Dan Jerram, NH Supt. of Schools Jeff Sousa, Treasurer Gordon Ross, Assessor Elizabeth Domas and Recording Secretary Penny Miller

**Absent** Camille Burford

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Guilfoyle called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

**Seating of Alternates** None

**Adoption and/or Revision of Agenda** None

**Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting December 12<sup>th</sup> 2023**

**Motion** by Ms. Helt to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2023. Second by Mr. Witte.

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

*Motion passes*

**Communication and Other Items Presented to the Board**

King & King will be at the March meeting and will discuss any audit issues.

Mr. Jerram said there is a difference of opinion of what the BOE surplus is. Contrary to the motion that there was a surplus of \$25,000 to be moved via motion in to the BOE non-lapsing account. According to our auditor Debbie Franklin there is only \$14,898. If this line isn't corrected at this meeting the audit can't be completed before the March meeting. The auditors can't close out the budget without this being done. This topic is addressed later in the meeting.

**Public Comment** None

**Tax Assessor 2023 Grand List – Elizabeth Domas**

Ms. Domas said between the Grand List from 2022 to 2023 the increase is \$184,192,529. A copy of the chart presented is available for viewing in the Town Clerk's office. There are 3 components to the Grand List – Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicles. The time frame for appeals is in March and there are numerous appeals pending. Motor vehicles went down \$3,514,410. Car values went up a few years back and now they have come back down. Personal property is steady growth and is up \$1,019,730. Real estate is up \$186,687,209.

Mr. Ross said given the increase of real estate properties will it shift some of the tax burden off other assets and onto homes. The piece of the pie paid by homeowners will be more than before. What percentage of the pie is now made up of homes and Improvements compared to the other two. Ms. Domas said that residential took more of a hit than commercial from the recent reval. Commercial was on an average of 25% and residential was about 33%. We have that many commercial sales in New Hartford.

Mr. Neale asked what personal property goes toward the grand list. Ms. Domas replied personal property is any equipment used for a business, unregistered vehicles and large boats, for example. Someone that has a business in their home that equipment is considered personal property. Mr. Neale said there is a significant exemption in that category. Ms. Domas replied that there are several exemptions available such as: manufacturers, farms (that get up to \$100,000 exemption), and others. Eversource is our biggest personal property. Mr. Jerram said that Aquarion will not show up on this list as they currently have a tax exemption agreement with the town.

Ms. Guilfoyle asked if Ms. Domas was happy with the appeal process and the revaluation company worked with. Ms. Domas said she works with Vision every day and they use the same software as she does. The whole process was smooth.

#### **New Hartford Public Schools / BOE Updates and CAPEX 23/24 Jeff Sousa/Tim Klepps**

Mr. Sousa said he is working with the auditors on the discrepancy. The original amount of \$25,000 was comprised of monies from tuition and insurance. Unfortunately, \$10,000 should not have been used by the BOE for salaries. The new amount of \$14,898 will be moved to the BOE non-lapsing account. Tuition money received cannot be used for salaries.

**Motion** by Ms. Helt to amend the previously approved amount that was placed in the non-lapsing account from budget year 2022-2023 from \$25,000 to \$14,898. Second by Mr. Witte.

Discussion. The audit can't be completed until the number has been changed. Currently there is \$100,000 in the non-lapsing.

*Unanimous*

Mr. Sousa said the Capex ties with what he has discussed with the BOF and BOE in his analysis of infrastructure. He applied for and received 3 grants. One from the Feds and 2 from the state. The grants total \$1.3 million to enhance the layers of security for the infrastructure for our 3 schools plus a small amount in the Central Office. Our match is \$462,000. These are 3-year grants and our average for each of the 3 years is \$154,000/year. Mr. Sousa said in last year's capital expenditures there was \$50,000 for district wide infrastructure. Security upgrades at Antolini for \$15,000 and an additional \$10,000 for New Hartford Elementary. Mr. Sousa would like to have the ability to reallocate funds from the 2022-2023 Capital by changing the titles of certain projects to get closer to the BOE grant expenditure of \$154,000. The paving of the walkway at Antolini was listed at \$20,000. There are Indoor Air Quality and HVAC inspections reports that we are required to do. To pay for this Mr. Sousa used \$15,675 of the \$20,000 which left a balance of \$4,325. He would like to take the \$4,325 along with the

\$10,000 that is in for replacing the rotting trim. This totals \$35,000. Technology was at \$49,000 but some of that has been expended leaving a balance of \$20,675. He is asking to reallocate the \$35,000 along with the \$75,000 which totals \$110,000.

Some of the things included to be done with the grants are windows that need to be glazed, replacement of doors & locks, the phone messaging system for mass messaging to LCD and Troop B, internal and external cameras and interoperable radios. Mr. Sousa asked that the items previously mentioned be reallocated and he is not asking for additional funds in this year's CAPEX. The CT grants were awarded Sept. 2023, and they expire June 2026. The Dept. of Justice grant was awarded October 2023, and it expires September 2026. The federal grant is \$0.72 on the dollar and the state grants are \$0.52 on the dollar reimbursement.

The line items Replace Rotting Trim and Paving Walkway will be deferred for another year.

Mr. Neale congratulated Supt. Sousa on getting all 3 grants. The downside is that some of the items will have to be deferred. Mr. Witte said it sounds like all the capital budget for the next couple of years is going to be tied to security. You will have a hard time doing much else. Mr. Sousa said that security takes precedence. Mr. Witte asked if he had a preliminary capital budget and Mr. Sousa said he is still working on it. There will be the \$154,000 but any additions will be left up to the Board of Education and the Board of Finance for approval.

Mr. Jerram said the challenge is that most of this work will have to be done over the summer months and during breaks. He also needs to include minority companies when going out to bid.

**Motion** by Ms. Helt that we make the change to the Board of Education CAPEX budget as requested by the Board of Education. The changing of the titles for the amount to \$35,000. It is \$4,325 from the walkway paving, \$10,000 rotting trim at Bakerville and \$20,675 in Technology to go toward the security match. Along with the \$20,000 of paving where \$15,675 went to Indoor Air Quality and HVAC leaving a balance of \$4,325 allocated to security. Second by Mr. Neale.

Ms. Helt said she is concerned that we are putting things off that need to be taken care of along with the \$154,000 we need for the security grants. The BOE has a lot to consider.

Ms. Guilfoyle asked for the breakdown of the grants. Mr. Sousa said that the Dept. of Justice grant was for \$669,000. The CT SSGP grant is \$407,000 and the MMSSGPS grant is \$213,000. He will do the larger reimbursement first. He invited the BOF members to come tour the buildings.

Ms. Guilfoyle said we can move some of the projects out, but the BOF needs to have an executive meeting to discuss the grants and what they will include.

*Unanimous*

## **Reports**

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Town Treasurer Ross reported that all the accounts are doing well. The monies from sale are not part of the General Fund.

### **First Selectman's Report:**

Mr. Jerram said there is a lot going on. The audit is just about done. He is working on the Capital draft budget along with the regular budget. The work on the Brodie bathrooms has started. Another STEAP grant was approved for the renovation of the town hall parking area. The minimum match on this grant is about \$45,000. The oil tanks, furnace replacement, paving and town hall improvements will be done as one. Mr. Jerram has collaborated with Mr. Sousa on the New Hartford Elem. Roof project. ARPA funds of \$187,000 have been set aside for this project. In general, all the schools are in good shape. The DPW machinery is holding up well. The cost for salt is \$100/ton and Mr. Helt is ordering more.

There are 3 inactive approved but completed subdivisions in town. Mr. Jerram has been working with the developers to get the deeds to transfer the roads and open space to the town. These documents will be accepted at a town meeting. The subdivisions are Evergreen Crossing (off Ramstein) and Barella Rd.

All our municipal solid waste (MSW) that goes through RRDD – a total of 10,000 tons/ annually of which 3,000 tons are attributable to New Hartford. MIRA is closed so they are looking for where our trash will go. Trash is the biggest problem in the state and the prices for this are going up in the next 5 years.

There will be 4 additional Early Voting days before the primary scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>. The general election is in November. The biggest difficulty for this early voting is to get people to work.

The building and zoning permits are all available on-line. The building fees may have to be modified. The fees are ordinances which require a town meeting.

### **ARPA Fund Update**

We are still shy by 50% overall. We received just over \$2 million for ARPA spending. One large line item is the sewer line project. Engineering has been retained. A building committee has been appointed. The Fire Department received a larger than expected bill for fire hydrants/fire protection. Aquarion rates are based on what it costs to fix their lines. The Fire Department will be able to tax them next year, but will fall short this year.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion** by Ms. Helt to adjourn at 9:23 pm. Second by Mr. Witte.

*Unanimous*

*Respectfully submitted by Penny Miller, Recording Secretary*  
*Attachment: Grand list chart*