

**New Hartford Board of Finance  
Special Meeting  
March 22, 2022 @ 7:00 pm**

**Present** Chairman Kerry Guilfoyle, Members: Dan Charest, Lou Helt, Paul LeClair, Charlie Neale, Ben Witte, Alternate: Ryan Bingham, Recording Secretary Penny Miller

**Also present** First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectmen Alesia Kennerson & Laura Garay (in at 7:15); Supt. of Schools Brian Murphy, BOE Chairman Karl Hermonat, Mary Beth Greenwood, Tom Buzzi, Alesia Kennerson, Kathryn Boughton (Reporter-Republican American),

**Absent** Krish Dasgupta and Allen Voghel

Chairman Guilfoyle opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

No alternates were seated.

**Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION:** by Ms. Helt to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2022. Second by Mr. LeClair.

On the March 8, 2022 minutes Mr. Neale asked that the following changes be made to those minutes. On page 3 his name is spelled wrong. It should be Neale not O'Neal. Then he asked that the following sentence made by Mr. Jerram regarding the shingles on the Town Hall roof be reworded to: *'He said the expense was moved up because with the loss of the building next door the deteriorating shingles have become more noticeable.'* Mr. Jerram said it makes no difference to him if it was changed. Mr. Witte asked Mr. Neale why the change, Mr. Neale replied that the original sentence sounded too judgmental to him.

On page 5, ARPA Updates, 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, the sentence that reads: *There was an original request for \$5,000 and it was pared down to \$2500.'* Should read: *'There was an original request for \$5,000 and it was pared down to \$1,500.'*

**MOTION:** by Ms. Helt to approve the amended minutes of March 8, 2022. Second by Mr. LeClair.

*Unanimous*

**March 12, 2022 minutes**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Charest to discuss the minutes. Second by Mr. Neale.

Mr. Neale said on the 1<sup>st</sup> page of the minutes the sentence that reads: *'The total 2022/2023 Proposed Budget is \$22,917,944. The assessment to New Hartford is \$10,348,816 or 1.28%.'* It should read: *'The total 2022/2023 Proposed Budget is \$22,917,944. The assessment to New Hartford is \$10,348,816 or a 1.28% increase.'*

*Unanimous*

**2022-2023 Budget: Discussion (All aspects: Town, NH BoE, Regional 7 BoE, CAPEX, etc.) and possible action on budgets for presentation at April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Public Hearing**

Mr. Jerram said the Grand List is going from \$689 million to \$713 million this year. With the proposed budget the town is able to absorb some increases in expenditures while lowering the mill rate by 3/10 of 1%. There will be increases on the cars but not the houses. Car values are going up 20%. The overall increase in spending is \$568,000. General Government operations is going up \$239,000 with Capital coming down \$51,000 for a net increase of about \$188,000. Local BOE operations going up \$176,000 and Capital going up \$87,000 for a net increase of \$263,000. Region 7 including Capital is going up \$130,000.

In General Government about \$108,000, of the net increase of \$188,000, is going into salaries. The Recreation Director is going from part-time to full-time. The Assessor will be completing training required for that position. Lastly a new highway maintainer will be phased in. About \$60,000 of the \$108,000 is associated with these 3 positions. The resident trooper is about \$11,000, ambulance \$11,600, libraries \$13,300, tree removal – we are now spending \$65,000 - \$70,000 per year. There has been savings in pension, debt service, and planning & development. All the revenues lines have been adjusted. Everything has been prorated.

In the Capital for 2022/2023 – the truck was taken out. The wing plow has been put in hold. The allocation for Recreation was reduced to \$15,000 and the Revaluation was moved up and the diesel fuel tanks were pushed out further.

Mr. Charest noted that in Debt Service the WPCA is in there for the year. Mr. Jerram replied that it is all about timing. If we get through PURA and we have the closing on or before Sept. 17 then the money won't be necessary in the budget. It's too early to tell. They go as fast as they want. He continued by saying that Aquarion is buying Torrington Water Company for \$90 million. The sewer in Torrington is municipal. The employees who answer the phones and do the billing were all guaranteed their jobs.

Mr. Jerram said that he asked Galasso to quote on two of the parking lots at Antolini School. To do the teacher's lot and the area by Oak Hill School entrance their quote was \$117,687.90 for both. In the BOE Capital there is \$120,000 for this year and next for each lot at Antolini School. Mr. Witte suggested that Supt. Murphy adjust his Capital Budget for next year. At the Public Hearing it should be noted that the school will be getting two parking lots done for the price of one in the 2022-2023 Capital budget.

Mr. Neale said that Connecticut Conference of Municipalities does a salary survey and asked if it had been consulted to get a sense of what assessors & town clerks make in Connecticut. Mr. Jerram said they refer to it all the time. The Litchfield Area of Council of Governments tracks the salaries for the 21 towns in the northwest corner. Mr. Neale said one number that did look maybe a little high was some of the assessor numbers. He said that Mr. Jerram had mentioned that the assessor had received training and she was given a raise. The money in the budget now is \$61,000. She isn't making \$61,000 now but that is money in reserve for when she is fully certified. Mr. Jerram said that money reflects pretty close to what she was offered by an abutting community to leave us after we had just trained her. An employment plan has put into place which includes benefits after they complete required classes. The best-case scenario of her becoming a certified assessor, is to take the required classes, tests and be certified by October. She will not use all that money in that line. Through the pandemic the Assessor Association stopped holding classes. So, there is a limited amount of people being trained to do this. Mr. Neale said there is a \$15,000 line item for a consulting assessor and this is because she isn't fully certified? Mr. Jerram replied there is a mentor for her. We have done this in other offices. You need a licensed certified assessor to sign the grand list every January. This person goes over all the oddball properties with the assessor and takes responsibility for the Grand List.

Mr. Neale asked for an explanation regarding the extra funding in the retirement pension line item. First Selectman Jerram replied that additional funding was approved by the Board of Selectmen to provide funding for contributions to a 457 plan for the position of first selectman. The Board of Selectman agreed to enact a policy that would provide for contributions to the First Selectman who also serves as the Chief of Police in accordance with the police union contract, Article 7 section 2. Incentives such as this encourage longevity within a position.

Ms. Guilfoyle asked about the cut in the line item for Beekley Library from \$255,000 to \$250,000. Mr. Jerram said the General Government is looking for a 4.4% increase. Therefore, those looking for money from us will be held to a similar increase.

Looking at the rest of the budget. The Judge of Probate is not a solid number. The Northwest Transit District has gone through a tough time for the better part of the last two years. He said he doesn't recall the last time he saw them in town. But since he started to look for them, he has seen them twice in a week. We do have our own transportation van and our drivers. We get federal grants that have been assigned to Northwest Transit plus the \$1,100 in the budget. In the current year there is almost \$2,400 that is going to subsidize another transit van in our town. This money could go toward funding our own. Northwest Transit was asked to provide how many people use their bus from New Hartford and how many of them are unique. Pre-pandemic they said there were about 130 unique users and now it is around 30 unique.

Mr. Witte asked if there were any other changes on the education side. Supt. Murphy said no. On the local school budget, Mr. Neale said the contractual increases for Administrators was 7%. He couldn't find as it tracked as line item in the budget. Supt. Murphy these contracts have been negotiated. The Director of Student Services went from 205 days to 215 days. The Administrators under School Offices there was an increase. The principals were also given a one-time increase. Mr. Murphy said the teachers across the state are getting about 3%. There wasn't a change in school insurance. Mr. Jerram said that Regional has the same insurance plan. There are 750 employees (school & town) in the consortium with Anthem.

**MOTION** by Mr. Witte to approve the New Hartford Town Budget for 2022/2023 dated March 21, 2022 in the total amount of \$26,588,830.90 subject to public input at the budget hearing. Second by Mr. LeClair.

*Unanimous*

**ARPA First Round: Discussion of incorporation into April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Public Hearing and May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 Referendum**

Chairman Guilfoyle asked about what will be presented at the Budget Hearing. Mr. Jerram said it's not uncommon to have a couple of items on the agenda. Part of the sale of water there was a public hearing and on review with counsel we are required to have a meeting within 6 months of closing of the deal. We just need a notice of public hearing.

Mr. Charest asked if the budget could be posted on the town website. Mr. Neale asked if the ARPA proposal could also be posted.

**MOTION** by Ms. Helt to adjourn at 8:33 pm. Second by Mr. LeClair.

*Respectfully submitted, Penny Miller, Recording Secretary*