

**New Hartford Board of Finance
Special Meeting – Public Hearing
April 5, 2022 @ 7:00 pm**

Present Chairman Kerry Guilfoyle, Members: Dan Charest, Lou Helt, Paul LeClair, Charlie Neale, Ben Witte, Alternates: Ryan Bingham (in at 7:17 pm), Allen Voghel and Recording Secretary Penny Miller

Also present Region 7 Supt. of Schools Dr. Judy Palmer, Reg. 7 Business Manager James Gaskins, Reg. 7 BOE Chairman Molly Sexton Read, Reg. 7 BOE members: Rob Jerram & Noel Gauthier; New Hartford Supt. of Schools Brian Murphy, NH BOE Chairman Karl Hermonat; NH First Selectman Dan Jerram, NH Selectmen Alesia Kennerson & Laura Garay; Kathryn Boughton (Reporter Republican American); Members of the public: Mary Beth Greenwood, Greg O'Brien and others.

Absent Krish Dasgupta

Chairman Guilfoyle opened the meeting at 7:00 pm and introduced the members of the Board of Finance.

Seating of Alternates

As all board members were present no alternates were seated.

Northwest Regional School District No. 7 Proposed Budget Presentation by Chairperson BOE Molly Sexton Read and Dr. Judy Palmer, Superintendent

The Region 7 budget and presentation can be found on the Region 7 Board of Education website: <https://www.nwr7.com/board-of-ed/budget-information>

Region 7 BOE Chairman Ms. Sexton Read went through some of the school highlights. This year's budget increase is 2.45% and the net total assessment is 1.97%. There are 6 new outplaced students whose tuition and transportation will need to be paid for at a cost of \$322,960. Regular education has a slight increase. The 2023 graduating class will need 25 credits to graduate. Since 2018/2019 school enrollment from the member towns has been declining. As of October 1, 2021 the total student enrollment was 935 which included 23 students from the Highlander Transition Academy (HTA). The school is required by law to provide an education for the HTA students, who have aged out of high school, until they are 21. Salaries are up 1.03% because of retirements or shifts. Whenever that happens the new hires sometimes cost less than those retiring. Benefits are up only 4.18%. Region 7 used the first round of COVID grants to provide Language Arts Support in the Middle School, cover the cost of bringing the HVAC system up to snuff to make sure it was doing an effective job in providing high air quality in the school. Also purchased was some technology such as Chromebooks and laptops. In the 2nd round of COVID grants Math and ELA/SEL was supported in the Middle School. Using the Emergence Connectivity Fund additional Chromebooks, licensing and software was purchased.

Public Comment Regarding Northwest Regional 7 Budget, only

Dan Jerram, Town Hill Road, said in 3 of the last 4 years New Hartford's bill has decreased. If you add up the decreases it is almost as much as the increase the town had in 2020-2021. Ms. Sexton Read said New Hartford's Assessment of 1.20% for this year is less than it was 3 years ago. Mr. Jerram said because of these favorable balances there hasn't been any increase of significance over the last 4 years.

New Hartford Public Schools Proposed Budget Presentation

Karl Hermonat, Chairperson BOE and Brian Murphy, Superintendent

The proposed 2022-2023 New Hartford Public School Budget can be viewed at www.newhrtfd.org under Site Shortcuts or:

<https://www.newhrtfd.org/cms/lib/CT01000055/Centricity/Domain/1/BOE%20Proposed%20Budget.pdf>

BOE Chairman Karl Hermonat started the presentation with a review of the mission statement, assumptions and priorities. He thanked the teachers, school staff, Supt. Murphy and administration for all the extra effort that has been put forth the past two years.

Supt. Murphy said the big driver in the Capital Budget this year is the paving of a parking lot at Ann Antolini School. The budget increases are Employee Benefits, Plant Operations, Pupil Transportation, Health Services, Technology, Library Media Center, School and Central Offices. The decrease next year in Special Education is due to the elimination of a one-on-one nurse that was needed for a student. There is also one less outplaced student. The Administrator's contract was just signed with a 7% increase. This increase was due because the Director of Student Services went from working 205 to 220 days. Also, a one-time stipend was given to the two principals to keep them competitive with the region.

Public Comment Regarding New Hartford Public Schools Budget, only

None

Town of New Hartford Proposed Budget Presentation Daniel Jerram, First Selectman

Link to the 2022/2023 Town Budget - <https://www.newhartfordct.gov/home/news/annual-budget-meeting>

First Selectman Jerram said that because of supply chain issues – there has been a rise in the valuation of our cars. The Grand List contains our homes & land, cars & trucks and personal property. The valuations of cars have sky rocketed. Cars have gone up about 20%. Expenditures are going up. We are spending about \$568,000 more. There is \$239,000 in General Government – a lot of this is salaries and, in some cases, trying to stay competitive. Abutting towns try to steal or lure our employees after they have been trained by us. The largest expenditure outside of labor is health care. With our constable system we must retain a resident state trooper. The Ambulance group because of COVID has lost a lot of their volunteers. The pension system has been closed so there are some reductions there. Currently the Recreation Director is a part-time position. Ed McCann, of the Recreation Commission, has stepped in to be the director during COVID. Currently Christine and the other people in the First Selectman's Office have been taking care of selling beach stickers, boat rack rental and campers. The plan is to make this a full-time position.

Total Debt Service is \$662,205. There is a slight increase for the Senior Van bus driver. The total Capital including the Board of Education is \$615,000.

The Grand List for the current year was \$689,642,137. With the jump in the value of the cars, it has gone up to \$713,104,484. An increase of \$23,462,347.

Public Comment Regarding Town of New Hartford Budget, only

Mary Beth Greenwood, 155 South Road, wanted to comment on the additional retirement benefit for the First Selectman. She disagrees with the structure of it. She feels that a salary increase is more appropriate way to compensate a position. She also didn't understand if this was something given every year or staggered.

American Rescue Plan (ARPA) BOS/BOF Approved Funds Presentation

Mr. Jerram said that all towns received ARPA – American Rescue Plan Act – funds and it came as two payments. Currently in the bank is \$984,923.54 with another payment coming. The total award for New Hartford is \$1,969,847.08. Ryan Bingham of the Board of Finance worked with the Board of Selectmen on this. There were a couple town meetings where input was received from various townspeople & groups as to how the money should be used. Input was also received via phone & emails.

More information can be found at: <https://www.newhartfordct.gov/home/news/annual-budget-meeting>

Some of the items are: a new ambulance for the New Hartford Ambulance Assoc., New Hartford Public Schools is requesting a new roof for the New Hartford Elementary School. As of July 1st, our police will need to have body cameras. Beekley Library and Bakerville Library have requested funds for some upgrades.

Public Comment Regarding ARPA Funds, only

Greg O'Brien, Burwell Rd, said that a great job has been done by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance. He thanked everyone for a job well done.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35.

Respectfully submitted, Penny Miller, Recording Secretary