

**New Hartford Board of Finance  
Special Meeting  
Monday, December 7, 2015 @ 7:00 pm**

**Present** Chairman Jim Fitzgerald, Members: Steve Tuxbury, Reggie Smith, Jr., Ben Witte, Alternates: Bob Nilsson, Bill Coates, Members of the public: Troy Lamere, Joe Toro, Dan Eddy, Bart Baxter, Jack Casey, Laura Garay, Mary Lou Rayno, John Burdick, Recording Secretary Penny Miller.

**Absent** Dan Charest

The meeting was opened by 7:00 pm by Chairman Fitzgerald.

**Seating of Alternates:** None

Reading from the agenda, Mr. Fitzgerald said this meeting was being held for purpose of interviewing candidate(s) for consideration of appointment to the Board of Finance to fill the vacancy for the seat vacated by former Board of Finance member Maria Moore.

To take any action on consideration, appointment of, or non-appointment of any candidate interviewed, to fill the vacant seat of former Board of Finance member Maria Moore.

Mr. Fitzgerald received a letter from the New Hartford Democrats in support of their candidate Daniel Eddy. This email was from Mike Companik, NHDTC Chairman, dated November 20, 2015. On November 29<sup>th</sup>, he received an email from Troy Lamere. Thirdly an email was received from Bart Baxter dated December 1<sup>st</sup>. Copies of these emails were given to board members to read and are part of these minutes. Mr. Fitzgerald proposed having a dialog with these candidates to answer any questions that the board members might have. He suggested 5 minutes per candidate.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted – this is not to fill a seat for 4 years. This is to fill a seat for 2 years. Her term was 4 years but by state statue, and this was verified by the town clerk, this position is only seated until the next election which will be 2 years from last month.

Mr. Smith would like to see the candidates tell the board a little more about themselves and why they feel they are a perfect fit for this board.

Bart Baxter was the first candidate. He thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak with the board. He said that everyone has his letter that he submitted so he wouldn't be going over those details. He hasn't been that involved in recent years. One of his children is getting ready to go to college and he now has some free time and a desire to become more involved with the community. There are a lot of things going on in town, some great things and some things we can improve on. The BOF has the unique ability to have an immediate and large impact on what happens in town. He would like to be a part of that. His background is in Financial Services currently working for Prudential Insurance. He is a Certified Financial Planner and is used to looking at budgets. He had filled a full-board seat and then was elected as an alternate 4 years ago. He ran in the recent election and was not elected.

Mr. Smith asked him what he thinks is the biggest hurdle that the town has to handle or face financially right now. What would you be looking at if you were appointed? Mr. Baxter replied a large financial issue is the sewer plant that has been going on for a number of years. I don't know if there is a means for resolution as I haven't been that involved in it but I am sure if there was it would have been resolved

by now. That is the biggest budget hurdle facing the town as well as some of the Capital Improvement projects – Carpenter Road Bridge and a number of other areas. Those are the two immediate issues facing the town. We have some great resources in town – Sundown and the river. We should be looking at bringing in small & mid-size businesses as well as an industrial park – those are the long-term financial goals. Mr. Smith asked him what about the WPCA causes a hurdle to the town. Mr. Baxter replied the overall expenses that are faced by the users. We need to ship water in to keep it going. He doesn't know what the long-term effect of that is. People are complaining about the fees associated with it and they are more than they can afford.

Mr. Coates asked him what his thoughts were on school consolidation. Mr. Baxter said he would need to take a deeper dive into the numbers. He doesn't know what the long-term costs are by leaving one of the schools buildings empty.

Mr. Witte didn't have any questions but he thanked Mr. Baxter for coming in and telling the board a little more about himself.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked the candidates to wait until the end when the voting would take place. Using pre-printed ballots each candidate would be voted on separately.

Mr. Eddy said he has been in town for around 40 years and his 6 children had gone through the school system. He is an accountant and has his own accounting business. He started out auditing and quickly rose to manager level. He has been involved in auditing for various not-for-profit and town audits (Town of Southbury, Holy Cross, CT Easter Seals, etc.). In running 4 years ago and again recently he has become very familiar with the town budgets for the last 7 years. He understands what transpires here, the difficulties and he feels he can add a lot of professionalism from his background. He specializes in small businesses doing financial planning and budgets. He has 70-80 small businesses as clients. He has been a coach for town sports and on the Rec. Commission. He was on the Study Committee for Brodie South. He has been very active member in town.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked what in your opinion do you think are the top 3 key issues that the town faces and will face in the next 5-10 years. Mr. Eddy replied the biggest issue and not that this board has a lot of direct control over is the education – both the regional and the local education budgets. He understands that the education budgets are controlled by the school departments. But we do have input and overall guidance in what we hope to do to minimize budget issues. The water / sewer rates are an issue for the current users and they are the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in the state from all the input that he has seen. But more so for business development – restaurants are heavy water users. The cleaner on route 44 is having problems selling her business because of the water rates. The 3<sup>rd</sup> issue is the overall general budget. A lot of positive steps have been made in setting up capital programs to extend out the purchase of major items. The meeting to consolidate expenses between the town and school was a positive step.

Troy Lamere said that filling Marie Moore's position is no easy task. He has been a resident of New Hartford for 20 years, married with no children. He has been involved with Inland Wetland for the past 9 years. For the past 3-4 years he has been following town politics running for First Selectman and Selectman in the last two elections. He has been following every board as much as he possibly can. He has a good grip on this board's direction and he agrees on how they react through the budget. He may not be a CPA but he has construction experience and with that background he feels it will help with that part of the budget. He also has a handle on most of the issues that his board deals with on a month to month basis.

Mr. Smith asked over the last 5 years the Region 7 budget has been going up significantly. What do you think this board should be doing to control costs? Mr. Lamere would like to see this board more involved with the 4 towns that go to Region 7 and work together on a solution. We have the most students there and we take the biggest brunt of all. We need to work with the other towns to find a solution. Mr. Smith continued, during the election we heard concerns about how you think the WPCA and the town should give relief to the water users. What do you think the town as a whole - users vs. non-users should be doing. Mr. Lamere responded there is no easy answer. He would like to see that the people would contribute to pay but he knows that isn't going to happen. He would leave that up to the taxpayers. He would like to see it go to referendum where the people could vote on whether they wanted to help the situation out to save the people who are on the sewer system and the businesses in town. Mr. Lamere said he doesn't see that in the near future. Mr. Smith replied that ability is within your grasp if you get a petition with 200 signatures to take it to a town meeting and referendum.

Mr. Fitzgerald passed out the ballots to each candidate to verify their names on the ballots. Ballots were given to the BOF members and the clerk recorded the following votes.

Troy Lamere – nay; Bart Baxter – nay; Troy Lamere – nay; Troy Lamere – yea; Bart Baxter – yea; Bart Baxter – nay; Bart Baxter – nay; Troy Lamere – nay; Dan Eddy – nay; Dan Eddy – nay; Dan Eddy – nay; Dan Eddy – nay.

Mr. Fitzgerald continued there were 12 ballots, 12 votes and there is no appointment. There were 3 nays, 1 yea for Bart, 4 nays for Dan and 3 nays, 1 yea for Troy. A message will be sent to the chairman of the Democratic Town Committee about the outcome of the vote. At tomorrow night's BOF regular meeting it will be brought and a decision will be made about advertising for the position. Input will be sought for a democratic or unaffiliated person.

Mr. Smith would like to see other members of the community step-up.

Mr. Fitzgerald thanked everyone for coming and putting their time, effort and interest into this. The ballots will go with the clerk and then to the town clerk.

**MOTION:** by Smith, second Tuxbury to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

*Aye: Unanimous*

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Miller  
Recording Secretary

Attachments:  
Email from Mike Companik, NHDTC Chairman re: Daniel Eddy  
Email from Troy Lamere  
Email from Bart Baxter  
Ballots with Town Clerk (not attached)