

**New Hartford Board of Finance  
Virtual Public Hearing via ZOOM  
June 2, 2020 – 7:00 pm**

**Present (Virtually):** Chairman Regina Wexler, Members: Dan Charest, Kerry Guilfoyle, Reggie Smith, Jr., Steve Tuxbury, Ben Witte; Alternates: Bart Baxter, Lou Helt, Paul LeClair and Recording Secretary Penny Miller

**Also Present (Virtually):** First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, David Rosengren (in at 7:10 pm), Supt. Of Schools Brian Murphy, BOE Chair Tim Goff and members of the public.

Chairman Wexler opened the meeting at 7:02 pm.

**Seating of Alternates:** None

**Opening Remarks:**

**Budget Overview FY 2020-2021 Regional #7, Local NH BOE and NH General Government**

Chairman Wexler said this has been a very difficult year, unprecedented and it is fair to say that nobody is happy with the decisions that we have to make. This is a year of potentially catastrophic health and financial issues being faced by our country, state and town.

First Selectman Jerram presented the Municipal Budget via ZOOM starting with the Summary Page. The Summary Page shows the past years and what is projected for the future. With a town of roughly 6,700 residents it is proposed to spend close to \$25.6 million, an increase of roughly \$732,000. In General Administration for the town, an agreement was reached with the bargaining units to forego raises in the next year and to build them into future years. The employees will work for the same salary but pay a little more in health care. In Education the local Board of Education is at \$8,539,106. This is minus the \$50,000 adjustment made at the last BOF meeting. Region 7 is at \$10,440,023 largely in response to the proration change that is driving their budget. Every year on October 1<sup>st</sup> they count up the children and divide the pie on how everyone is assessed. This is one of the years where we are swinging from roughly 48% to 52.5% of the pie.

BOE Chair Tim Goff said the board had originally proposed a budget of \$8,589,106, a 2.84% overall increase. This was due to an increase in salaries and special ed cost. Other than that, operating wise it was a flat budget. The cut of \$50,000 made by the BOF will be discussed at the next BOE meeting on June 6, 2020. In Capital \$146,500 had been budgeted but because of the COVID-19 pandemic a cut of \$75,000 was made which lowered the Capital to \$71,500. There was a \$100,000 savings due to the school closure and it will be coming back to the town on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Wexler asked if there was any increase to their operating budget last year other than Special Ed and contractual raises. Mr. Goff replied that it is fair to say the two places of increase were special ed costs and salaries.

Mr. Jerram said the Region 7 budget has been approved by their board. He has met with Dr. Palmer and reviewed the COVID savings that are ongoing because of the school closure. He had made a request to consider crediting the 4-member district towns with the savings in terms of either money or a reduction in assessment. They are still calculating and operating in their school year and fiscal year. They informed him they will assign all the member towns a credit. Their target was roughly \$200,000 and New Hartford may get \$100,000. The number is not carved in stone but we could be safe in budgeting a number of \$75,000 that would occur after they close their books on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The question after the public hearing is how does the board want to book those savings. Mr. Jerram continued going through the budget noting where the reductions were made. The entire budget is down about 2%.

Ms. Wexler asked about running the camp this summer. Mr. Jerram said there are a lot of restrictions on every operation of running a camp. Right now, without special permission they can only have 30 children but they have to be in groups of 10 and can't share a building or facility. The target opening date is for the end of June. Brodie Beach is now open.

The total outstanding debt service is \$684,555. The use of the senior bus has been well received and used frequently. Last year the town spent a total of \$545,500 in Capital. This included initiatives for the town of \$435,000 and the local BOE at \$110,500. Next year the town is projected to spend \$50,000 less and the schools were proposing to cut \$40,000 from last year's projections. The total projected in Capital for next year is \$456,500.

In revenue, the local taxation is \$20,263,659.87 combined with some short-term interest. The insurance company, because of the ratings, gives some reimbursement every year if there aren't any claims.

The largest single source of revenue is ECS (Educational Cost Share) - \$2,913,010.00, Pass-through grants of \$110,990 and Oak Hill (rental of classrooms at Antolini School) for \$132,000.

Based on the calculations of the budget estimates put forward, the mill rate would need to be raised 1.79% from the current mill rate of 30.25 to satisfy that need. The mill rate required to satisfy that would be 30.792 or roughly 30.8.

### **Public Comment Regarding Budgets**

Ms. Wexler read into the record an email received from Jennifer Miller

*Hi. As many other towns around us are doing, I would ask the BOF to request from school boards a zero net increase for the 2020-2021 school year, given the economic circumstances we are facing due to Covid 19. To do otherwise would be irresponsible at this time. It's time to think outside the box.*

*Respectfully,*

*Jennifer Miller  
530 Steele Road*

Ms. Wexler asked for public comment and none was made.

**Motion:** by Smith to adjourn at 7:36 pm. Second by Guilfoyle.

*Unanimous*

Respectfully submitted,

Penny Miller  
Recording Secretary