

**Town of Newfields
First Session of the 2008 Annual Meeting
Deliberative Session January 31, 2009**

William Davis, Moderator
Sue McKinnon, Town Clerk

Board of Selectmen
Wesley T. Moore
Michael Woodworth
Rosanne Gilbert

Moderator Bill Davis called the meeting to order at 9:10am. He called for a pledge of allegiance and introduced the head table. A few administrative items were reviewed.

Article 1. Shall the Town of Newfields raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the Warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling One Million, Five Hundred Twenty One Thousand, Nine Hundred Eighty-Five Dollars (\$1,451,985.00)? Should this be defeated, the default operating budget shall be One Million, Five Hundred Twenty Thousand, One Hundred, Forty-Six Dollars (\$1,520,146.00) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Newfields or by law or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 49:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

Bill Davis read Article 1. A motion was made by David Dwyer and seconded by Don Doane to accept Article 1. Wes Moore addressed the audience and recognized the following residents who passed away in 2008: Jacqueline Stewart, Frances Peaslee, Alfred Conner Jr., and Norm Rollins.

Wes thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated that the voters and taxpayers are the legislators of Newfields. He explained that in November 2008 we met with the Department of Revenue Administration to set the tax rate. As a result of declining revenues, the tax rate went up and the tax burden for residents increased by \$500,000. He stated that the national economy is in serious trouble and it is affecting all of us. Budget cuts are difficult to make but are necessary in these times.

Wes reviewed the budget line by line. Budget Committee Members Jamie Thompson, John Crisp and Mike Kahlke were thanked for the time they dedicated to meeting with department heads.

4130-4139 Executive- This line includes the salaries of the town clerk/tax collector, administrative assistant, selectmen, trustees and janitor.

Paul Keefe requested a breakdown by department of each person's salary. The Town Clerk/Tax Collector and Administrative Assistant salaries were discussed. The wages for the temp that filled in for the Administrative Assistant were discussed. Her wages were not a one time cost. They were a portion of the Administrative Assistant wages.

4140-4149 Election, Reg & Vital Statistics has decreased because there are fewer elections in

2009.

4150-4151 Financial Administration remained the same as last year and covers the cost of the annual audit and ADS software.

4152 Revaluation of Property has decreased because the revaluation was done in 2008. It was explained that the assessor reviews $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Town each year for a period of four years and then on the fifth year a revaluation is done. The Town has had a contract with Purvis Associates for several years and their work is monitored by the State.

4153 Legal Expense has remained the same as last year. It appears that the line was overspent but \$12,800 was reimbursed. Wes noted that the Selectmen try to use the free legal services of the Local Government Center as much as possible.

4155-4159 Personnel Administration has increased by \$10,000 due to payroll deductions which have increased. It includes the NH Retirement contributions, withholding, social security and Medicare taxes.

4191-4193 Planning & Zoning expenses have decreased \$2,000 due to the fewer number of hearings being held.

Michael Sununu questioned the 3% increase in salaries and the Consumer Price Index (CPI). He asked why we were using inflated CPI's for fuel prices and salaries.

4194 General Government Buildings has increased by \$8,000 and includes all operating costs and expenses for the Town Hall. Wes explained that in past years we have had a 5K warrant article for Town hall maintenance but last year it did not pass after it had been amended to 10K. To prevent that from happening again the Town hall maintenance expenses are being added to this line. Wes stated that this year we chose not to lock in oil prices which ended up being a smart decision.

Natalie Fream asked how much the church paid to rent the Town hall. The total is approximately \$4,800 per year.

William Podszus asked about the Town's revenues and made a recommendation to have those amounts available for future meetings. It would be helpful to see the reimbursements and revenues that offset the costs. A motion was made and seconded to provide revenues at all future deliberative sessions and budget hearings. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Don Doane mentioned that there will be an expense and revenue report published in the Town report. Wes explained that because the deliberative session was held so early this year we didn't have time to get the Town report printed in time for the meeting. James McIlroy suggested that the revenues be discussed at the budget hearing.

Copies of the revenues and reimbursements were made and distributed to the audience.

4195 Cemeteries has remained the same as last year. The cemeteries are managed by the trustees and last year they reimbursed the Town \$9,951. Jed noted that money comes from the trust funds for cemetery plots under perpetual care.

4196 Insurance has increased \$8,000 due to higher health and dental insurance costs.

There are six employees who receive health and dental and the fewer the employees the higher the costs. LGC provides the dental and Primex provides the health insurance.

4197 Advertising & Regional Associations has remained the same and includes the costs of legal notices and membership dues to various organizations.

4199 Other General Government has increased due to the hydrant fees going up \$4,160.

4210-4214 Police has increased to \$287,514. Wes explained that the department has four full time police officers and there is no coverage between the hours of 3am-7am. One issue of concern is if there is an emergency between those hours there may be a long wait. If there is a life threatening emergency officers will be sent from the Towns that surround us. No dispatch or police officer is going to stand by when there is a life and death situation.

Wes Moore said that in his view there isn't a lot that happens in this Town. The police do an excellent job but we have more coverage than we need in his opinion. He made a motion to cut the police budget at a Selectmen's Meeting but there was no second made.

Rosanne Gilbert's concern with cutting the police budget is that if an emergency is called in and Newfields has no one available to respond, the response time from another community may take a long time. She commented that she worked as a dispatcher in the past and our police department is the best in the area. Anyone who has lived in Newfields for some time knows what our police department used to be like and what it is today. Crime may go up if people know we don't have police officers on duty during certain times of the day. In her opinion, cuts should not be made to the police or fire department budgets.

Michael Woodworth wants 24 hour coverage. He is concerned with the downturn in the economy. If it becomes known that Newfields has no coverage between 11pm-7am it may be an open invitation to criminals.

Chief Art Reed explained that when he was hired, the Selectmen at that time, told him they wanted a full-time police department and that is what he has done. The cost to hire and train a part-time police officer is about \$14,000. If the intent is to replace one full-time officer with part time help there is a problem. There is nothing cast in stone that states one full-time police officer equals two part-time police officers. Most part-time police officers have full time jobs in other communities.

Wes said that the history of police officers in Newfields is that the part-time police officers invariably move on to bigger and better things.

A motion was made by Paul Keefe and seconded by Michael Sununu to reduce the police department budget by \$50,000 with the intent of eliminating one full-time police officer.

Wes clarified that reducing the department by one police officer means reducing coverage by 4 hours per day. There would be no coverage from 11pm-7am. He recommended changing the amendment amount to \$30,000 or \$40,000. The reason being, that they would want to give the officer until May 1 to find another job so he would be paid until that time.

Win Fream asked the Chief if the Budget Committee asked him to come up with an alternative plan. The Chief was told after his budget was finalized and he was not asked to come up with alternatives.

Michael Sununu added that the police budget has increased an average of 8% per year since 2001 and unfortunately this is the biggest operating budget in Town. Other communities are asking employees to take pay cuts, they are not giving increases.

He does like reducing the police coverage but in his opinion we have been liberal long enough.

There was a lengthy discussion on the ramifications of reducing the police department by one officer.

Chief Reed informed us that there would be coverage from 8am-11pm and the State Police would have to provide coverage during the other times.

The amendment on the floor was amended to \$40,000 with a motion by Paul Keefe. The amendment was not supported by a second.

Bill Davis explained that any amendment affects the bottom line of the budget. The Selectmen are allowed to move money around within the budget line items. The amendment will not bind the Chief to reduce his department by one police officer. He may do what he sees fit with his budget. It would be unusual for the Selectmen not to follow the intent of the vote of the body. Wes added that there would be political consequences not to follow the will of the people. He did make it clear that the Selectmen cannot force the Chief to eliminate one officer.

The Chief noted that Officer Liebenow, who was in attendance, would be the person laid off if this amendment passes.

A motion was made by Greg Corson and seconded by Win Fream to reduce the police department budget by \$30,000. The motion carried. The amendment was voted on by secret ballot. The results of the ballot vote to eliminate one full time police officer were as follows: Yes-33 No-38. The motion failed and the police department budget will remain at \$287,514. A motion was made by William Podszus and seconded by Michael Woodworth to restrict reconsideration of the police department budget. All were in favor and the motion carried.

4215-4219 Ambulance is the same as last year.

4220-4229 Fire department budget has been reduced to \$39,400. Chief Jeff Buxton stated that he turned in \$12,000 from last year.

4240-4249 Building Inspection is the same as last year and includes the building inspector salary and permit fees. Building inspection had \$10,000 in reimbursements.

4290-4298 Emergency Management has been reduced by \$500. Jeff Buxton commented that we should be getting reimbursements from the federal government due to emergencies in 2008. When the FEMA payments are received they would be allocated to the different departments according to Nancy Spencer.

4299 Other (Including communications) is the dispatch contract which has increased to \$6,000 for 2009. Wes said the contract is a fixed fee for 5 years and ends in 2010.

Michael Sununu asked if there was an opt-out clause. There is a 60 day opt out clause. Last year a committee was appointed to study the pros and cons of Rockingham County Dispatch versus Newmarket Dispatch. It was determined that Newmarket Dispatch was the best option for Newfields. They provide better support to fire and police.

4316 Street lighting has increased to \$7,800.

4312 Streets and Highways were reduced by \$70,000 with the intent of eliminating paving in 2009. The Board of Selectmen revisited the decision and decided it was a mistake to cut the budget and eliminate paving. Wes apologized to Brian for not informing him of the cut prior to the budget hearing. Wes would like to look into obtaining a bond to get caught up on paving. With interest rates extremely low, it may be cheaper for the Town. A motion was made by Wes Moore and seconded by Dan Conner to add \$70,000 back into the highway line for the purpose of paving. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Rosanne informed everyone that she has been working on doing research for the recovery stimulus plan. There is a possibility that funds may be allocated to the Town of Newfields from the Economic Stimulus Package providing we apply for them. She has been working with Brian Knipstein on a list of items that need to be done in Town. It includes the paving of five roads and town hall maintenance and repairs.

4323 Solid Waste Collection has increased by \$3,542 and it is for trash and recycling pickup. Wes noted that recycling costs the town more money but it is better for the environment.

4324 Solid Waste Disposal has decreased. These are the tipping fees to dispose of our trash. The tipping fee is \$72.00 per ton.

4325 Solid Waste Cleanup has decreased to \$2,000. There will be no spring and fall clean up days in 2009 but we will continue to participate in the Hazardous Waste Collection Day with Exeter in October.

4415-4419 Health Agencies has remained the same as last year and is for local service organizations.

4441-4442 Administration & Direct Assistance is welfare assistance provided to residents in need and the amount will remain at \$2,500.

4520-4529 Parks and Recreation has remained the same as last year and is for the mowing of town parks.

4550-4559 Library has been decreased by \$2,500 with a recommendation of purchasing fewer books. Mr. Case recommended closing the library. He made a motion to remove all funds for the library. There was no second. **Michael Sununu noted that it was not he who made that motion.**

4583 Patriotic Purposes is the cost of flags and remains the same at \$250.

4589 Other Culture & Recreation has remained the same and is for the three celebrations that are held annually. Those are the Holiday Celebration, Senior Luncheon and Memorial Day Parade.

4611-4612 Admin & Purchase of Natural Resources has increased \$875.00 due to the expense of monitoring the conservation easement deeds.

4711 Debt Service is for the two conservation bonds that we have and the costs are the same as

last year. The first bond will expire in 2012.

Article 1 will be placed on the ballot as amended with the total operating budget being \$1,521,985.00.

Article 2. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate Fifty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$54,000.) for the purposes of mosquito control by targeting mosquito larvae (known as Larviciding and Arbovirus Surveillance)?

Bill Davis read Article 2. A motion was made by William Podszus and seconded by James McIlroy to accept article 2 for discussion. Wes explained that last year the roadside spraying began in early August. It was done in advance of any notice from state agencies. He would like to see spraying begin a bit earlier this year. In 2008, \$41,900 was spent on mosquito control.

Robin Connor said that personal protection will always be the number one defense against EEE and Lyme disease. Sarah MacGregor from Dragon Mosquito added that treating ticks is much more exhaustive than mosquitoes. The spraying that is done at the school would be very effective because they use backpacks at that location. Otherwise, the expense is costly at \$100,000 per 9 square miles.

Win Fream asked if the truck spraying is dangerous. Sarah said that according to the Center for Disease Control the fog which is used to control adult mosquitoes is not dangerous to humans because of the small quantity of insecticide being discharged. Peter Gould noted that he lost his bees last year due to the roadside spraying. Any resident that does not want their property sprayed should call Dragon Mosquito.

Robin Connor said that larviciding is the preferable way to deal with mosquitoes because it targets them in the water before they hatch. Larviciding is one of the components of an integrated pest management program. Adulticiding and personal protection are the others. She added that we are in a high risk area and should be following the three tiers of the plan.

There was concern that if the warrant article failed as written there would be no larviciding or spraying. James McIlroy suggested separating the warrant article into two parts, similar to last year's article, to prevent that from happening.

A motion was made by Alison Watts and seconded by Dave Mason to create Article 2a in the amount of \$32,000 for larviciding and Article 2b in the amount of \$22,000 for adulticiding. All were in favor and the motion carried.

A motion was made by James McIlroy and seconded by Wes Moore to add truck spraying in parentheses to article 2b. All were in favor and the motion carried.

Article 2 as amended will be placed on the ballot as follows:

Article 2a. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate Thirty Two Thousand Dollars (\$32,000.00) for the purposes of mosquito control by targeting mosquito larvae (known as larviciding) and Arbovirus Surveillance (known as trapping and testing of mosquitoes)?

Article 2b. Should article 2a pass, shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate an additional (\$22,000.00) for the purpose of mosquito control by town wide adulticiding (truck spraying)?

Article 3. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000.) to be placed in the previously established fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund for the purchase of a new fire truck?

Bill Davis read Article 3. A motion was made by William Podszus and seconded by Dave Mason to accept Article 3 for discussion. Fire Chief Jeff Buxton explained that the purchase is planned for next year. The plan is to replace the tanker and update it to a Class A piece of fire apparatus. It is mandatory to have two Class A pieces of apparatus. Jeff added that if the warrant article passes there will be a total of \$385,000 in the capital reserve for the purchase. The original plan was to replace a truck every 5 years and it has now been 9 years. There was no discussion. Article 3 will be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 4. Upon Citizen's Petition properly received, of at least twenty-five (25) registered voters. Shall the town enter into negotiations with and be given authority to grant a lease for the Old Post Office at fair market value, to Main Street Art (a local non profit organization), for a term of five (5) years based on the cost to improve, renovate, and bring the existing facilities up to current building, fire, and accessibility codes. The lessee, Main Street Art, will provide all funding for the improvements, maintenance, and will pay for all utilities within this term in exchange for the lease abatement.

Bill Davis read Article 4. A motion was made by William Podszus and seconded by Win Fream to accept Article 4 for discussion. Wes Moore explained that the old post office has been unoccupied for a few years with the exception of the downstairs that is rented out to the Martins for storage. At one time, the building was put up for sale but no offers were made. The Selectmen asked the Main Street Art group to put together a plan and then they began negotiations providing there would be no cost to the town for the maintenance and repairs of the building. Several issues came up that need to be resolved. One being that the Selectmen did not have the authority to enter into an agreement with them for more than one year.

Kelly Corson spoke on behalf of Main Street Art. The group would like to lease the old post office building for a community arts center. The center would provide art classes for adults, seniors and children. They would like to collaborate with the Library and provide special workshops and art openings.

She explained that the building is in disrepair and does need work to bring it up to code. There are fire safety issues with the rental downstairs. Fireproof sheetrock would need to be installed to make the place safer. The handicap ramp needs to be repaired or replaced. The rest rooms need to be redone. They intend on replacing the furnace and water system, install new flooring, electrical updated to provide grounded outlets, smoke detectors and heat detectors. The estimated repairs will be approximately \$35,000.

Kerry Gosselin was concerned that residents may think we are still trying to sell the building and she thought something should be added to the article for that purpose.

According to Wes the sale of the building would require a ballot vote of the town.

A motion was made by William Podszus and seconded by James McIlroy to amend the warrant article by adding, "enter into negotiations with and be given authority to grant a lease". The motion carried and Article 4 will be placed on the ballot as amended.

Article 5. Upon Citizen's Petition properly received, of at least 25 registered voters. To allow

Nancy Kingston, currently owner of the Newfields General Store, a special exception to operate her real estate office, an existing business of 9 years, Nancy Kingston Realty, LLC above the Newfields General Store. A special exception is being requested with no zoning changes.

Bill Davis read Article 5. A motion was made by Jeff Feenstra and seconded by Natalie Fream to accept the article for discussion. Wes explained that this warrant article does not obligate the town to act in any particular way. If it passes, it is a referendum for Nancy to bring to the Planning Board or Zoning Board.

Planning Board Chairman, William Meserve stated that the store is a non-conforming existing use. The main issue with moving the real estate office upstairs is the traffic. Nancy Kingston has been before the Zoning Board of Adjustment for this purpose before and it did not pass. His concern is how the building may be used in the future. We know how Nancy will use it but what about the next owner.

Nancy Kingston said that she realizes she has limited parking. The limited parking does not hinder people from stopping in the store now. Employees have been parking across the street and with the apartment gone there will be two additional parking spaces available. She stated that most of her real estate work is done on-line and there are few clients who visit her office. She is unable to keep her office in Exeter and would like to make it part of the General Store.

Rosanne mentioned that the Zoning Board of Adjustment is the only one authorized to grant a special exception.

Article 5 will be placed on the ballot as written.

Article 6 . To hear reports of agents and committees or officers heretofore chosen.

Wes informed us that the Board of Selectmen has agreed to consider a windmill or wind turbine to generate energy. They have been working with Town Planner Clay Mitchell and installed an anemometer at the water and sewer treatment plant to monitor the wind speeds. It is his vision that some day we will put a windmill up and reduce our carbon footprint. This year there is a zoning warrant article to allow for any type of renewable energy systems in Town and he urges you to vote in favor of the article.

Article 7. To transact any other business which may legally come before the meeting.

There was no other business

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 2:14pm

Respectfully submitted,

Sue McKinnon

