

February 12, 2022

The special meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Newton was held on the above date at 9:00 a.m. Present were Mr. Couce, Mr. Dickson, Mrs. Diglio, Deputy Mayor Teets, Mayor Schlaffer, Thomas S. Russo, Jr, Town Manager, and Teresa A. Oswin, Municipal Clerk/Deputy Town Manager. Also present were Mrs. Monica Miebach, CFO, and Jennifer Dodd, Human Resources Director.

Mayor Schlaffer made the following declaration that "in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this special meeting was given to the two newspapers of record and posted on the official bulletin board on February 4, 2022."

COMMENTS BY TOWN AUDITOR

Mr. Tom Ferry, Town Auditor, addressed the Council and outlined Newton's financial status.

Mr. Ferry started by acknowledging Tom, Monica, and the rest of the staff for their exceptional work. He said it is his job to give you the tools and information to make good financial decisions.

He first reviewed the current fund, stating it is where the bulk of the tax revenue comes in and pays for the operations of the Town.

Mr. Ferry then provided some financial advice and stated the fund balance is **\$3,476,303**, an increase of \$553,898 over last year, which is very good.

The Results of Operations (income over expenditures) increased \$1,979,000, We use these funds to balance the budget (Fund Balance). Mr. Ferry reviewed some historical data on the Town's Fund's balance. The Fund Balance is currently at the highest level it has ever been.

Mr. Ferry went on to say the Tax Collection rate of 97.93% , last year it was 98.02% and the prior 97.92% we have been very consistent. The tax collection rate determines the amount you have to put in the budget as a Reserve for Uncollected Taxes (RUT), which is required by State statute. The Town is the collection agency for the County and the School, and they get 100% of the taxes they bill, if there is a shortfall, the RUT is what the Town can use to offset the cost. The lower the tax collection rate, the more you have to put in the budget. There is a provision the Division of Local Government Services allows municipalities to do in which we use a three (3) year average tax rate. Monica and I agree it would be good to you this provision this year, so the average rate we use will be 97.96%.

Mr. Ferry stated one tax point is \$59,900. For a house assessed at \$100,000, one

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tax point equates to \$10. The average assessed house in Newton is \$185,293, so one tax point is \$18.57. Mr. Ferry advised Council the Newton budget and tax levy as proposed represents the municipal taxes on an average assessed home will be **\$60** for which is an increase of **\$5.00 a month**.

Mr. Ferry briefly reviewed the NVT – Net Valuation Tax.

Mr. Ferry outlined the financial status of the Newton Water and Sewer budget. He stated the fund balance end at \$2,150,040 with is a slight increase of approximately \$85,000 over the previous year. The Results of Operations (Revenue of Expenditures) were \$679,467, which you put into your savings account, but you took out \$594,000 to balance the budget to keep the water and sewer at the same rate. The Fund Balance has been slightly increasing each year, Mr. Russo did a Master Plan for major projects a few years ago, and based upon those we did a water/sewer tax rate increase to fund those projects. We started the year \$2,064,000 and now we are at \$2,150,000.

Mr. Ferry reviewed the Town's Current Fund net debt. The Town has been paying off its net debt and it is down from the 2014 level of 2.65%. It is now at 1.89%. Mr. Ferry stated the Town has done a lot of refunding in an effort to reduce debt. In 2021 we refunded \$13 million resulting in a saving of \$1,482,000 between now and 2038 in the current fund. For the water and sewer budget we refunded \$8.9 million, resulting in a savings between 2021 and 2038 of almost \$617,000. The debt service is on a steady pace to get lower. As part of the refunding, we have to have a rating agency come in. The top two agencies are Moody's and Standard & Poor's. Standard & Poor's gave us our rating for 2021, which was AA-. Their highest rate is AAA.

There were no questions from the Council, Mr. Russo thanked Mr. Ferry for his time and presentation.

TOWN MANAGER'S REVIEW OF BUDGET SUMMARY

Mr. Russo then began the review of the 2022 budget document noting the appropriations; reserve for uncollected taxes/tax appeals; and health care coverage. He reviewed the revenues in support of the budget.

Mr. Russo asked Mrs. Miebach to explain the CAP Calculation page. Mrs. Miebach explained the Town is allowed up to a 3.5% by ordinance. The budget as presented is a 1% increase. The additional 2.5% serves as a safety net in case of an emergency. If the ordinance is not adopted, and we have an emergency we would have to go before the Local Finance Board which is timely and costly. The top half of the page is what the State

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allows, the bottom shows the existing numbers where we stand, having an excess of \$585,338.99 which we are allowed in appropriations in calendar year 2021 as long as we pass the ordinance. Mr. Russo added, this is done every year and is basically a number on paper.

Mr. Russo continued to review each page of the budget document and addressed all questions of the Mayor and Town Council.

Mr. Russo noted the fiscal facts: The property tax is divided among the Newton Board of Education, Town of Newton, County of Sussex, County Library, and County Open Space. The chart below illustrates the percentage that each of the jurisdictions received in 2021 from the average taxpayer in the Town.

Newton Board of Education	51.89%	\$2.331
Town of Newton	33.39%	\$1.5
County of Sussex	13.67%	\$.614
County Library	.98%	\$.044
<u>County Open Space</u>	<u>.07%</u>	<u>\$.003</u>
Total	100.0%	\$4.492 per \$100 of assessed value

Mr. Russo, continued with the Revenue Budget 2022 for various departments within the Town of Newton.

Mrs. Diglio questioned the increase on the line item 104316. Monica explained because of COVID, we are allowed to use a three (3) year average on local revenues.

Mr. Couce questioned if we could use more fund balance, Mr. Russo explained we are using the maximum amount according to our policy.

Mr. Dickson questioned the insurance costs. Mr. Russo explained it was due to an annual increase from Aetna which is beyond our control.

Mr. Couce questioned if we had any success in having unvested LOSAP money returned. Monica responded she has it as a project for the Spring.

Monica also informed the Council we received FEMA money in the other day for a snow storm last January and for COVID.

Mr. Russo continued his review. Mrs. Diglio questioned the increase for website. Mrs. Miebach stated the budget document reflects the bills received prior to December 31. In January we received the December bills, and they are not reflected in the document.

Mrs. Diglio questioned the decrease in postage. Mr. Russo ask Mrs. Oswin to

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explain. Mrs. Oswin explained we have a mail machine in which we keep money on account. We had a surplus of over \$50,000, so I requested and received a refund of \$36,000. She calculated with the vendor how much we actually use annually and how much we still have on account and adjusted the budget for it. We use approximately \$8,000 a year.

Mr. Dickson questioned the decrease in the elections advertising. Mrs. Oswin explained since we moved our election to November, we are no longer responsible for the advertising, the County is responsible.

Mrs. Diglio questioned the tax map line item. Mr. Russo explained with new development coming in the maps have to be updated. We are currently behind in updating ours. We need to do this in 2022. It will go through our Engineer's office.

Mrs. Diglio questioned next the increase in part-time salaries in the Assessor's office. Mrs. Dodd explained that is for Danielle Finkle's salary.

Next, Mrs. Diglio questioned the increase in printing and REM in the Tax Collection budget. Mrs. Miebach explained this year we will be sending out estimated tax bills because the County takes a long time to get the rate to us. For In REM foreclosures, we are cleaning up some old items so we can sell the foreclosed properties at auction.

Mr. Russo went on to explain the cost for consulting with our professionals.

Mr. Dickson questioned the Planning/Zoning salary amounts. Mr. Russo explained we have a new Planning/Zoning Administrator and a new part-timer. Mrs. Diglio questioned it further, stating we have always had a part-timer in the past. Mr. Russo explained it is how it is allocated. Mrs. Dodd stated you also have to take into consideration last year we budgeted two of them onboard as one was transitioning out, training the new person. Mr. Dickson questioned if the reason the part-time amount charged was low was due to the position being vacant most the year. Mr. Russo responded yes.

Mr. Dickson questioned the consulting services in Community Development. Mrs. Miebach explained it is for our Planner and other professionals required to attend Planning Board meetings. Mr. Russo explained it is for anything we can't charge against escrow. Mr. Couce questioned the increase. Mr. Russo explained \$15,000 is for Jessica Caldwell to manage the NPP grant.

Mr. Couce questioned vehicle maintenance for the Building Department, is it part of the shared service with Hardyston. Mr. Russo explained it was for the shared vehicle

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between Code Enforcement, Zoning, and Community Development.

BREAK – 15 minutes.

DPW/RECREATION/WATER & SEWER BUDGET REVIEW

Adam Vough, Assistant DPW Director, Ken Jaekel, DPW Director, Sherri Kaylani, Recreation Supervisor, Rick Straway, Road Foreman, Jon Kazer Licensed Operator, and Debbie Danielson, Administrative Assistant were present to review the DPW, Water & Sewer, and Recreation budgets as well as address the Capital Improvement projects.

Mr. Vough briefly reviewed the Public Works budget. Mrs. Diglio questioned the increase in contractual. Mr. Vough explained it covers everything and it is beyond our control.

Councilwoman Diglio stated she would like money to be included in the budget for summer help for the DPW. Mr. Russo advised funds are available.

A brief discussion ensued on the Recycle and Trash Removal. Mr. Vough stated recycling amounts are constantly changing and trash removal is unknown, he is covering his bases.

Mr. Couce asked about snow removal for Grand Villaggio. Mr. Russo stated we will begin this year once they get their final C.O.

Mrs. Kaylani, reviewed the pool budget. Mrs. Diglio questioned the part-time salary increase. Mrs. Kaylani explained we will be doubling the staffing for this year. Budget is based on a best-case scenario. In 2018, the State added a new code increasing the lifeguard regulations. Returning staff will get a slight increase to retain them, we are expanding programs, will bring back past events, and offer more items in the snack stand. We will be opening the slide which will require more staff.

Mrs. Diglio questioned if we receive any money from the swim team. Mrs. Kaylani explained yes, we do a contract, and it is based on the number of participants they have.

Mrs. Kaylani reviewed her request for a new camera system at the pool. This is needed because of safety concerns. Our current system does not allow for us to see when things happen outside the scope of the current cameras. She is proposing 4 new cameras, one being multi-sensory with improved software. We had an incident last year where someone fell, and our existing cameras did not pick it up.

Mrs. Kaylani reviewed the remainder of the Recreation budget.

At this time, Mr. Vough reviewed the Capital requests.

The current Field Groomer is quite old and starting to fall apart. The Slope Mower

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is a vital piece of equipment we use especially on the hilly areas at the dams. The current one is starting to nickel and dime us and is falling apart.

With regards to the Sterling single-axle dump truck, Mr. Straway stated the current one we have now needs an oil pan and power-steering pump. We wash it after every storm, but the salt is really starting to eat everything away. There is a lot of rust in-between the body and frame rails. It is a primary vehicle, and it is due to be replaced. We bought it new in 2004.

Mr. Vough explained the wall on the front side of the municipal building needs to be repaired. At the same time, they plan to remove the "garden" area and to expand the concrete making it a more useable area.

Mr. Russo asked Mrs. Dodd to explain the request for the Shuttle Bus. Mrs. Dodd explained both buses we have are falling apart. We spent \$20,000 on repairs this past year. The backup bus is now the primary bus because we can't get parts. We desperately need a new bus.

Mr. Russo asked Mrs. Miebach to review where we stand with the Water/Sewer budget. Mrs. Miebach explained at the close of the year we had \$250,000 in unpaid utility accounts. The Governor lifted the moratorium on non-payment of utility bills, and we set up a payment plan for those wishing to participate. One week before Christmas, when the moratorium was to be lifted, the Governor extended the date to March 15th. Until then, we cannot charge interest, issue penalties or fines for non-payment, or shut-off any water accounts. We did have about 75% set up payment plans. Come March 16th, those still outstanding will be shut off.

Mr. Jaekel reviewed the Water/Sewer operating expenses.

Mrs. Diglio asked 6077241. Mrs. Miebach stated it encompasses our contract with Rapid Pump. Mr. Jaekel stated this is to off-set what is not encompassed in the maintenance contract. Some items last year were taken out of capital but could have been charged to this account.

At this time, the Mayor asked if any of the Council had questions on the DPW, Recreation Budgets, or Water/Sewer operational budgets before we move on the W/S capital.

Mr. Couce questioned the DPW capital improvement item – truck replacement. In the cost estimate are there any customizations or is it a standard issue truck. Mr. Vough advised it is a bare bones single axle truck however they do opt for the stainless

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steel body so it lasts longer. Mr. Couce asked if it would be more beneficial to retooling the vehicle replacement plan to establish an annual reserve instead of strictly going to bonding. Mr. Russo agrees it would be great if we had the money. In a perfect world he would put more money into the CIF and it would build up the cash. We just don't have the cash do that without raising the taxes beyond the \$60 increase. Anything we shift from debt authorized to CIF is a direct hit on the immediate tax. A discussion ensued on what would be best. Monica mentioned we have to add the Animal Control Van in the amount \$40,000 to the CIF, plus in the Water/Sewer capital improvement we are three crew-cab pickups in the amount of \$150,000. Council offered no changes.

Mr. Russo reviewed the Water/Sewer capital items by reading a memo from the Water Engineer, David B. Simmons, Jr. and Sewer Engineer.

"WWTP Fence Replacement Phase 1

The Town owns and operates the wastewater treatment plant located at 25 Townsend Street in Newton. The original WWTP was constructed in the 1950's and portions of the fence appear to be from the original plant's construction. The fence around the WWTP provides security for one of the Town's key pieces of infrastructure while also providing for the safety of the public, by keeping people from entering a potentially dangerous facility. The perimeter fence is approximately 1800feet long. In order to undertake the project in financially manageable pieces, we recommend undertaking it in two phases. The first phase would include the southwest and northwest sections of fence; and the second phase would do the balance. We would look to replace the existing 8-foot-high chain-link fence in kind. The only suggested change would be to use PVC coated rather than galvanized.

Estimated Construction Cost: \$50,000

WTP Roof Replacement

The Town owns and operates the Morris Lake Water Treatment Plant located at 60 Morris Lake Road in Sparta. The original WWTP was constructed in the early 2000's and the roof is from the original plant's construction. Typical useful life for a membrane roof is 20-25 years. As such you can see that at approximately just over 20 years old, the roof is well beyond it's useful life. Leaks have manifested themselves at various locations in the building and the situation must be corrected to avoid the deterioration and damage to equipment associated with the leaks. We propose to replace the existing roof with an EPDM membrane. This should address the situation for the next 20+ years.

Estimated Construction Cost: \$240,000

WTP Chemical System Piping Replacement

The Town owns and operates the Morris Lake Water Treatment Plant located at 60 Morris Lake Road in Sparta. The original WWTP was constructed in the early 2000's and the chemical piping is from the original plant's construction. Due to the harsh and corrosive environment associated with two of the chemicals (Chlorine and Sodium Hydroxide), the piping, valves and appurtenances have corroded and started to leak.

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That leakage also resulted in damage to the concrete surfaces of the floors and walls in their vicinity. We propose to replace the piping, valves, etc. and repair the concrete as part of this project. This will help maintain a safe and clean environment at the WTP and allow for a more efficient operation.

Estimated Construction Cost: \$60,000

Sparta Glen – Montana Crossing Improvements

After the August 2000 flood in Sparta Glen, a new 20" ductile iron transmission main was constructed in Sparta Glen from Morris Lake Road down to Glen Road. The new main alignment was able to reduce the number of stream crossings from seven (7) to three (3).

The second stream crossing located approximately 1,200 feet west of Morris Lake Road is the crossing known as the Montana Crossing. Over the past 22 years ±, after several additional hurricanes impacted the Sparta area, the flow of water in Sparta Glen Brook has eroded the streambed material off of the top of this transmission main crossing to the point where the concrete encasement is exposed, and water in Sparta Glen Brook basically cascades over the concrete encasement around the 20-inch water transmission main.

Newton Department of Public Works performed a test hole at the Sparta Glen Brook crossing in 2019 to determine the level of rock in the area of the transmission main crossing. Plans will have to be developed to lower the transmission main in this area and encase it in concrete. It is anticipated that an additional easement will be needed from the Township of Sparta for the section of new transmission main under the brook.

Estimated Budget Amount: \$115,000.

Mayor Schlaffer asked if the Council if they had any questions. With no questions offered, Mr. Russo requested to take a short break.

BREAK – 5 minutes.

POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW

Chief VanNieuwland came forward to review and outline the police budget.

Mrs. Diglio questioned the amount of increase for crossing guards, was it due to an increase in the number of guards or was it salary increase. Mrs. Dodd explained there was an increase, however you need to keep in mind there were periods of time the guards were not working last year due to the pandemic.

Mr. Dickson asked what goes into the autos/equipment line. Chief VanNieuwland the steep increase is because we had a car totaled last year and we had to replace it.

The Chief stated he is seeing an increase across the board from all our vendors, and he has tried to negotiate to keep the price down.

In the CIF, he is requesting \$45,000. He explained our copier is at the end of its useful life, it was purchased in 2009. It has done over 4 million copies and we can no longer get parts for it. Our network/switches are over 12 years old. At this point it is a

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security risk. The software is not supported anymore, so we are no longer getting updates, which leaves our network very vulnerable. He would like to go with a more universal product, so if we switch IT vendors it would be an easier transition. Our current system does not work remotely, and this summer we had our internet go down. Most of our systems are cloud based and we lost everything. The flip over didn't work, and it was because of our firewall, so we really need to replace it. He is requesting security cameras. Our current cameras are from around 2006. Our current system misses a lot of things, including an accident in the back parking lot this past year. They no longer make parts for our current system. The new cameras will give better coverage including the employee entrance on the side of the building. Lastly, he is requesting the replacement of our body cameras. We currently have generation II, and we are experiencing problems, and not supported by vendor anymore. They are out of warranty, last year we had to send 4 cameras for service and it cost \$500 each. New cameras will guarantee us cameras for the next three years.

Mr. Russo asked the Chief to comment on the crosswalk signage/ADA ramps on Ryerson Avenue. The total cost is \$40,000, the School Board to yes to paying \$20,000, but he would like the Town of cover the remaining \$20,000. The Chief explained the school use to have different lunch periods, they have changed their policy and do one mass lunch period. The theory is for the kids to use the time to study or go to lab. It creates a mass exodus, and has created havoc with traffic and overwhelming. We are working with the school. We have officers assigned and worked with the school to put pedestrian signs in the road way. Those signs are about \$500 each and trucks sometimes run them over. The enhancements Harold Pellow's office have put forward would really help the area.

Mr. Russo asked the Chief to talk about the dispatch center upgrades coming down the pike in 2023. The Chief explained the State is upgrading the 9-1-1 system and it is not compatible with what we currently have. The State is saying by sometime in 2024, everyone will have to start getting on board. We have a quote from a vendor for \$280,000-\$300,000. He is looking at other vendors to get a cheaper price. It would involve taking out our old system and putting in a whole new system. If we don't update, we will lose our 9-1-1 center, but we would still have to have staff 24/7 for walk-ins as we are a place of refuge.

Chief reviewed current staffing in the department. This past year Chief Osborn, Lt.

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Monaco, and Off. Kaylani retired. We hired some off the Civil Service list and we did some transfers. Transfers are good because we can get them on the road quicker. We had a lot of overtime this year because holes in staffing. In 2022, Sgt. Tosti and Lt. King plan to retire starting terminal leave in May. In 2023, Sgt. Teets plans to retire and start his terminal leave in February. Lt. Muller plans to start his terminal leave in August. He is looking to get a transfer to replace Tosti and Kaylani and go off the Civil Service list for King's replacement.

Chief VanNieuwland briefly reviewed Congressman Gottheimers' proposed bill to help small departments like Newton to offset some expenses related to training and overtime.

Deputy Mayor Teets stated when going with a new company/software for the dispatch center, sometimes going with new and they haven't worked out the bugs could haunt you. Chief VanNieuwland stated he is meeting with 5 other PSAPS to see if we can get a bulk rate with Motorola. Mayor Schlaffer thanked Chief VanNieuwland for coming in and reviewing his budget.

FIRE DEPARTMENT BUDGET REVIEW

Chief Razzano and Deputy Chief Miller, came forward and outlined the Fire Department budget.

Mr. Dickson question if the PPG is different from the turnout gear. Chief Razzano explained it is turnout gear.

Chief Razzano stating they have 6 new recruits in school and they have had a another person showing interest.

Mr. Russo asked Chief to explain the request for cameras at the Firehouses. Chief stated it would be for both firehouses and it is for safety precautions for those entering/exiting the premises. Deputy Chief Miller explained Firehouse #1 will be an 8-channel system with 4 cameras, Firehouse #2 will also be an 8-channel system with 6 cameras. Mr. Couce questioned if all the cameras could be combined. Mr. Russo stated we would review.

As for the capital requests, Chief Razzano reiterated they have 7 new members coming in, and the price includes 8 sets of gear. A discussion ensued on the gear replacement timeline. Last time a bulk amount of gear was purchase was in 2015, so they need to be replaced by 2025, and we are trying to do it a little at a time. Older gear is given to Junior's, as they are not in danger.

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Chief outlined the request for the replacement of Truck 802, a 20-year-old Pierce Snozzle with a 750 gallon tank with a 1,750 pump. They are looking to replace it with a Quint engine with an elevated water way with a straight stick 75-77 ft. water reach, increased life safety, reach, and better turning radius.

The committee started meeting in August, narrowed it to two vendors. Pierce and Ferrara. They are waiting for final specs. Both quotes are under the \$945,000. Both are under the Houston-Galveston Area Council co-op. Warranty bumper-bumper is 2 years. The ladder will be 10yr. Each vendor offers different financing plans. One company offers a trade-in for current truck. Waiting for appraisal, which Deputy Chief estimates at about \$30k-\$40k. Mr. Russo asked if either company offers an option for the members to see the truck being built. Deputy Chief said they both have a four-member precon inspection. Pierce was in Wisconsin and Ferrara is in Sparta. And both offer a four-person final inspection crew. Ferrara time to completion is 360-days from letter of intent. Pierce would be 16-18 months.

A discussion ensued on whether to wait a year. The cost increase from last year is 10%, so next year will be even more. In 2021, we spent \$20,000 on maintenance for 802.

Mr. Dickson agreed he believes a short-stick with an elevated waterway is the best way to go. He asked if we have a formal vehicle replacement plan. Deputy Chief stated we have in the past, refurbish at 15, engine at 20 years, and Tower at 25 years.

Mr. Couce questioned what is driving the replacement being done this year. He asked what the downside is to waiting. Deputy Chief Miller stated the current truck is not reliable and we are spending a lot of money on repairs. Mr. Couce continued to question the need for the replacement and asked if we could make it a reserve vehicle and leave the fleet as is. Mr. Couce asked if there are incidents where we have the entire fleet rolling to a call. If not, is there a cost benefit to keeping the fleet the way it is. Deputy Chief Miller stated the benefits to getting a new truck is: 1. If Tower 804 goes down, it has a ladder on it. The new truck will have a ladder on it, so we will never be without ladder coverage. With the new developments going up this is important. 2. With a Spring Street fire scenario or high-rise building scenario you will now have the protection of 2 aerials in Town useable for life safety, maximizing fire coverage on both sides of the building. So, we won't have to rely on mutual aid coming in a minimum of 11 minutes later.

Mr. Dickson asked if the current 802 has ever been updated. Mr. Miller stated it was never done, due to budget constraints, and it is past the age to do now.

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Mr. Couce asked how the department has done without having a stick so far. Mr. Miller stated we relied on mutual aid, which he stated earlier at best it is 11 minutes out. Mr. Couce states he is not sure if there is enough of justifications to have our own piece as opposed to relying on mutual aid. He questioned why can we step back and allow mutual aid resources to help our Town. Deputy Mayor Teets stated if it is her house on fire, she does not want to have to wait for mutual aid. Deputy Chief Miller stated time is of the essence. Chief Razzano stated they get County alerts when apparatus is down, and one of our mutual aid ladders has been frequently down on and off, which puts your mutual aid response even farther away. Deputy Chief Miller stated we are very lucky we are getting 6-8 new guys, other departments are running with only 3-4 guys, and they are our mutual aid companies. Miller stated the aerial waterway and actual stick are two different things. So, if were to replace the snozzle with a snozzle it would be 1.6 million, we thought keep the aerial waterway and having the bonus ladder would be a win-win especially with all the new buildings going up in Town.

Mr. Couce asked how often in the department do we have to wait for mutual aid. Deputy Chief Miller stated it depends on the call. A discussion ensued. Mr. Couce stated when there was a fire at the high rise 2018, our aerial didn't roll for a significant amount of time. We had mutual aid aerial services come in. Chief Razzano stated they responded pretty quickly. Deputy Chief Miller said it was the second apparatus on scene. The times the aerial was not at the high-rise was when we were in the process of replacing the ladder truck 804, and it took Sussex and Sparta 15-17 minutes to arrive on scene.

Mr. Russo asked if when they see new buildings being built do you pre-access what apparatus will be used. Chief Razzano stated they do get copies of the plan and review what apparatus would work best.

Mr. Couce questioned if we could place in developer agreements some sort of fee sharing or costing sharing to cover new equipment. Mr. Russo explained that is frowned upon and not a common practice anymore, because it looks like a quid pro quo.

Mr. Couce questioned if there is any reason 802 is being replaced at its current age as opposed to being older. There is a survey of the County apparatus that shows there are a significant number of pieces still in use from the 90's, 80's, and even 70's in Sussex County. Newton's fleet is relatively new and seems to be replaced relatively frequently. Deputy Chief Miller stated it is based on call volume. Some towns keep older

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trucks as "parade pieces". Newton does not have parade trucks; we have work trucks and they are used frequently. The hours put on the truck are more than miles.

Mr. Dickson asked if we could get a monthly report which gives us calls, call volumes etc., to keep the Council informed. Deputy Chief Miller said he can do that.

Mrs. Diglio thanked the fireman for all they do especially as volunteers

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mayor Schlaffer opened the meeting to the public via Zoom.

No one from Zoom came forth.

Mayor Schlaffer opened the meeting to the public in attendance.

Jennifer Dodd, 160 Sparta Avenue, stated her house is set back, and she has a four-home shared driveway. The ladder truck is not getting to her house, this new vehicle could be very beneficial to homes such as hers which she believes there are numerous ones in Town.

No one else from the public addressed the Council.

TOWN MANAGER'S REVIEW OF THE BUDGET

Mr. Russo stated he concluded his review.

Mayor Schlaffer asked if any Councilmember has any comments.

Deputy Mayor Teets said thank you to all involved in the budget prep. She knows a lot of work goes into it, you presented a good package.

Mayor Schlaffer stated his choice would be to not go with Pierce for the firetruck because the don't offer the trade-in option.

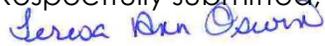
Mrs. Diglio stated she is concerned about the \$60 increase coming from \$12 last year especially with not knowing what is coming from the school and County budgets. She would like to see if we could bring it down a point.

Mr. Russo responded, the only way to do that would be to layoff staff. He is ready to consider that. He has a layoff plan if Council would like to go that route. We would have to start RICE noticing employees for the next meeting. We could push the fire truck a year, that would bring the amount down, but next year it will be a larger increase. We started at an increase of \$240 and we got it down to \$60. If we have to cut further, it will be in staffing. Ms. Miebach stated the reason last year came in at \$12 is because we refunded five (5) bonds. Mr. Couce stated we could put off some of the capital purchases in an effort to decrease the increase. Mr. Dickson stated he is not in favor of cutting staff or pushing off the capital purchases.

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A brief discussion ensued regarding pushing off capital purchases for another year. The consensus of the Council is to leave the budget as presented. Mr. Russo advised when Congressman Gotthiemer is here Monday, the Council should ask him for funding for emergency vehicles, communication centers, etc.

There being no further business to be conducted, upon motion of Deputy Mayor Teets seconded by Mr. Couce and unanimously carried, the special meeting was adjourned at 12:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Teresa A. Oswin, RMC
Municipal Clerk