

**BOROUGH OF NEWTOWN  
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT**

Minutes of the special meeting of the Board of Burgesses of the Borough of Newtown on **Tuesday, May 26, 2020** held remotely due to the COVID-19 mandates and precautions and pursuant to the Governor's Executive Orders to vote on the proposed budget for the fiscal year 2020-2021. Warden Gaston called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

**Present:** Warden Jay Maher, Senior Burgess Chris Gardner, Second Senior Burgess Betsy Kenyon, Burgess Anthony Baiad, Burgess Bill Lucas, Burgess Bill Eder, Burgess Jim Gaston, Tax Collector Jodie Enriquez, Treasurer Paula Brinkman, Zoning Officer Rob Sibley, Tree Warden Rob McCulloch, Clerk Ann Scaia and Borough Attorney Monte Frank.

**Absent:** None.

**Also Present:** 8 members of the public.

Warden Maher thanked everyone for attending the meeting and copies of the 2020-2021 proposed budget were distributed prior to the meeting via email to the members of the Board of Burgesses. Warden Maher stated he was approached about the budget amount of \$225,520, with approximately \$155,00 derived from tax payers and \$71,000 from revenues from prior year and building revenues. He believes the \$35,000 anticipated from the building revenues may not be realized since the Toll Brothers project appears to be on hold. This may lead to the Borough utilizing funds from the general fund to cover approximately 30% of the budget. Warden Maher noted 10 line items have been reduced and 4 line items that have been increased as he outlined the budget. There will be monies required for the line item of Election since there will be an election next year. Soldiers and Sailors line item has increased due to a much needed maintenance on the granite on the monument and masonry attached to it.

Revenues Anticipated from Prior Year are \$35,000.00; Building Revenues Anticipated are \$35,000.00; and Interest is \$1,000.00 making total revenues other than taxes equal to \$71,000.00. The Tax Collection Rate is 98.5%. The Proposed Mill Rate for 2020-2021 is 0.66% which is slightly lower from last year.

Warden Maher asked if there were any questions. Burgess Gaston felt the budget was well thought out particularly with significant anticipated revenues added to the budget that may not be fully realized with building revenues. He further stated the budget and the mill rate is lower than the 2019-2020 budget and mill rate. Further he stated due to COVID-19, the Board of Burgess will be addressing at the June Borough meeting the ordinance from the Governor allowing the Borough to defer taxes being due for two months. Senior Burgess Gardner is concerned we may not realize the full \$35,000 from building revenues. He believes we can utilize general funds to

offset any discrepancy. He also hopes to resume pursuing the capital project for sidewalks during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. He closed by stating he believes the budget is conservative, well thought out and is pleased there is a reduction of spending and a reduction in the mill rate.

Second Senior Burgess Kenyon stated she supported the budget. Burgess Eder and Burgess Lucas had nothing further to add. Attorney Frank stated pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order the budget was promulgated and there was an email address that allowed for written submissions. There was at least one written submission that was distributed to the members of the Board of Burgesses. In conformance with the Executive Orders, following this meeting the Borough Clerk will publish on the town website a recording of this meeting. He believes the Board of Burgesses has fully complied and gone above and beyond what is required by the Executive Orders.

Robert Hall, of 5 Nettleton Avenue, inquired about year ending spending of Legal Fees and if there would be monies left over. He also inquired about the increase in spending for the Soldiers and Sailors line item for 2020-2021. Burgess Eder explained the increase is to cover expensed to repair and clean up the Soldiers and Sailors monument and the masonry surrounding it. Burgess Gaston confirmed by year's end Legal Fees will be approximately \$15,000-\$20,000 which is within the budgeted amount of \$20,000.

Robert Geckle, of 35 Queen Street, commended the Board on coming in under budget for the past few fiscal years. He inquired what the final spend will be for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Warden Maher recognized the sidewalks line items of \$10,000 for a sidewalk repair on 35 Main Street due to COVID-19 will not be spent. Mr. Geckle expressed concern the 2020-2021 budget will also experience an under spend of approximately \$35,000. He also expressed a concern the tax payers are paying taxes to a budget that under spends and with a fund balance of approximately \$649,000. Senior Burgess Gardner did not foresee an under spend of \$35,000 at the close of the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Burgess Gaston further confirmed the budget will be approximately \$10,000-\$15,00 under budget.

Deborra Zukowski, of 4 Cornfield Ridge Road, asked what is financial target for the fund balance (which is approximately \$649,000) for good accounting practice. Warden Maher stated good practices would have a line item on the fund balance policy dedicating at least one year's worth of the Borough budget. He further stated, the Board of Burgesses will be working with the Borough auditor on fund balance policy in the near future. Mrs. Zukowski further inquired about the sidewalk projects and what amount will be budgeted from the fund balance. Warden Maher stated the amount would be at least \$100,000. Mrs. Zukowski further asked how the project would be approved. Burgess Gaston stated the Board of Burgess would vote on the project after a public hearing. Mrs. Zukowski asked if the fund balance of \$35,000 is approximately 15% of the budget. Burgess Gaston confirmed her statement is correct.

Sara Findley, of 9 Lovells Lane, expressed discontent of having to pay taxes for services (town water, sidewalks, etc) not available to her that other town residents did benefited by.

**Burgess Gaston made a motion to approve the Borough's 2020-2021 budget,** seconded by Senior Burgess Gardner and unanimously approved.

**Burgess Gaston made a motion to set the Borough's mill rate at 0.66%,** seconded by Second Senior Burgess Kenyon and unanimously approved.

**Burgess Gaston made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:10p.m.,** Burgess Baiad seconded the motion and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Scaia  
Borough Clerk