

**TOWN OF NEWMARKET, NEW HAMPSHIRE
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING**

January 13, 2025

TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM

Approved May 19, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Christopher Wolfe, Scott Foster, Justin Looser, Cris Blackstone, Danielle Honan, School Board Rep Dan Smith, Town Council Rep Brian Ward

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Vice-Chair Brian Rowley, Ned Carpenter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tim Chiou, Brian Hickey

ALSO PRESENT: Town Manager Steve Fournier, School Superintendent Todd Allen

Chairman Chris Wolfe welcomed everyone to the January 13, 2025 Municipal Budget Committee Meeting and called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC FORUM

Chairman Wolfe opened the Public Forum at 6:37 pm; seeing no members of the public wishing to speak, he closed the Public Forum at 6:37pm.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Wolfe said tonight the Budget Committee will vote on the Town and School FY2026 Budgets and Town and School FY2026 Warrant Articles.

Vote on Newmarket School FY2026 Operating Budget

Superintendent Todd Allen said at the School Board Meeting on Thursday the Newmarket School Board voted unanimously to approve all financial Warrant Articles. He said he also received data last week for the 2023-2024 School Year on per-pupil costs: State average was \$21,545 or 6% increase; Newmarket average was \$23,269 or 1.8% increase over 2023-2024; extract Bond costs average is \$400 less than State average and that gap is closing.

Vote on School FY2026 Warrant Articles:

Article 1. Election of officers. – N/A

Article 2. School District FY2026 Operating Budget: To raise and appropriate as FY2026 Newmarket School Operating Budget the sum of \$28,311,594; if defeated Default Budget is \$28,261,333, or governing

body may hold one special meeting per RSA:40 to discuss revised Operating Budget only; majority vote required. He said over the last few years the budget has gone up about 4% and this is significantly lower (1.97%) to allow for Teachers Contract Article 3. This article will result in \$0.62 increase over previous School Tax Rate of \$13.34, with new tax rate of \$13.96; if defeated tax rate will be \$13.96.

Recommended by the School Board 5-0

Roll Call Vote: Cris Blackstone-aye, Scott Foster-aye, Justin Looser-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye, Chris Wolfe-aye.

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0

Article 3: Proposed NTA Contract. To approve the 4-year contract between Newmarket School and Newmarket Teachers Association: FY2026-2027 \$706,557; FY28-FY28 \$686,755; FY28-FY29 \$509,208; further to raise and appropriate \$697,797 for upcoming 2026 fiscal year; estimated tax impact \$0.41.

Recommended by the School Board 5-0

Roll Call Vote: Cris Blackstone-aye, Scott Foster-aye, Justin Looser-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye, Chris Wolfe-aye.

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0

Article 4: Defeat of Article 3. If Article 3 NTA Contract is defeated this authorizes the governing body to call one special meeting to address Article 3 cost items only, at its option. – N/A

Article 5: CIP Reserve Fund. To raise and appropriate \$200,000 to be added to the School Improvement Capital Reserve Fund; further to authorize the use of this amount from the June 30, 2025 fund balance, no impact on taxation.

Recommended by the School Board 5-0

Roll Call Vote: Cris Blackstone-aye, Scott Foster-aye, Justin Looser-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye, Chris Wolfe-aye.

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0

Article 6: Special Education Reserve Fund. To raise and appropriate \$65,000 to be added to Special Education Trust Fund for unanticipated special education expenses; and further to authorize the use of June 30, 2025 fund balance; no impact on taxes.

Recommended by the School Board 5-0

Roll Call Vote: Cris Blackstone-aye, Scott Foster-aye, Justin Looser-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye, Chris Wolfe-aye.

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0

Vote on Newmarket Town FY2026 Warrant Articles

Town Manager Fournier said 2 Bond Warrant Articles are not officially valid, but it will not affect the Budget Committee vote tonight. Also, it is the Budget Committee's Budget which goes on the ballot.

Article 1. Election of Officers – N/A

Article 2. Replace Bay Road Force Main and Pump Station. To raise and appropriate \$5.5M Bond or Notes for replacing Bay Road Force Main and Pump Station, with \$2.5M potential Congressionally Directed Spending, possible local, State, or Federal grants, remainder by rate payers.

Recommended by the Town Council 6-0

Roll Call Vote: Cris Blackstone-aye, Scott Foster-aye, Justin Looser-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye, Chris Wolfe-aye

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0

Article 3. Plan & Design of Bay Road Force Main Replacement. Issuance of \$100,000 in Bonds for Planning and Design of Bay Road Force Main Replacement from State Revolving Loan Fund with \$100,000 principal forgiveness; no impact on tax rate.

Recommended by the Town Council 7-0

Roll Call Vote: Cris Blackstone-aye, Scott Foster-aye, Justin Looser-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye, Chris Wolfe-aye

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0

Article 4. Cushing Road and Lubberland Drive Stormwater Improvement Project. To raise and appropriate through serial bonds or notes the sum of \$1,440,000 for stormwater system improvements along Cushing Road and Lubberland Drive through the CWSRF Loan Fund with \$360,000 principal forgiveness, or \$0.07 on tax dollar. Loan repayment will start in 2027.

Recommended by the Town Council 6-0

Mr. Foster asked if the \$0.07 would start as soon as the \$360,000 was received; Town Administrator Fournier said yes.

Roll Call Vote: Cris Blackstone-aye, Scott Foster-aye, Justin Looser-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye, Chris Wolfe-aye

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0

Article 5. Amendment to Police Union CBA. To see if Town will vote to approve the cost items in the Amendment to the Police Union Contract, and further to raise and appropriate \$295,025 for the next fiscal year with \$0.17 increase on tax dollar.

Recommended by the Town Council 7-0

Roll Call Vote: Cris Blackstone-aye, Scott Foster-aye, Justin Looser-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye, Chris Wolfe-aye

Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0

Article 6. Town FY2026 Operating Budget. To raise and appropriate as an Operating Budget the sum of \$18,634,219, 5.35% increase of \$946,388; if defeated Default will be \$18,145,158; passage will amount to \$4.65 of the tax rate, \$0.26 increase over previous year: General Fund \$748,852, Special Revenue Fund \$92,701, Enterprise Funds \$104,830.

Recommended by the Town Council 7-0

Municipal Budget Committee Meeting
January 13, 2025

Motion by Dan Smith to approve the Town Council approved FY2026 Town Operating Budget of \$18,634,219; **Seconded** by Justin Looser; **Roll Call Vote:** Cris Blackstone-aye, Scott Foster-aye, Justin Looser-aye, Danielle Honan-aye, Dan Smith-aye, Brian Ward-aye, Chris Wolfe-aye
Recommended by the Budget Committee 7-0

Article 7. Establishing a Charter Commission – N/A

Chairman Wolfe said the Deliberative Session will be held February 1, 2025 with Town at 9:00 am and School at 10:00 am.

MEETING MINUTES – None

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairman Wolfe said there are 3 seats open on the Budget Committee, as well as his position, as he is resigning for personal reasons. He thanked everyone on the Budget Committee for being involved and doing their part in contributing to the Community. Councilor Ward thanked Chairman Wolfe for all his hard work and wished him well in the future.

Next Meeting: To be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

Scott Foster moved to adjourn the Budget Committee Meeting; seconded by Councilor Ward; all in favor 7-0.

Chairman Wolfe adjourned the meeting at 6:58 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary