

Town of New Scotland  
Budget Workshop  
10/21/2020

The following Town Officials were in attendance:

Supervisor:	Douglas LaGrange
Councilperson:	Adam Greenberg Bridgit Burke William Hennessy Daniel Leinung
Highway Superintendent:	Ken Guyer
Town Clerk:	Diane Deschenes

**1. Call to Order**

Supervisor LaGrange called the workshop to order at 6:30 PM. We are meeting through Zoom per the Governor's Executive Order 202.1 which includes not having public meetings. To get started, a roll call attendance was taken.

Supervisor LaGrange said that we went through the A fund, B fund, and DB. After reflecting what we went over and maybe looking at things a little more, was there anything in those funds that you had questions or comments that you wanted to talk about further? If not, we can move ahead. He will note that in Executive Session the other night we did discuss potential pay raises. Councilperson Hennessy said did you just ask about B and other funds? Supervisor LaGrange said that he did. Councilperson Hennessy said that we never really went over B. We went over DB. We really didn't go over B. Supervisor LaGrange replied that we went over the front sheets on all of those. Do you have a particular question? Councilperson Hennessy said to hold on.

EMS/ALS Discussion

Councilperson Greenberg said that he had a question that we haven't talked about. He thinks it's only up a percent or two this year but can you update us on the status of the EMS and ALS budgets? He knows that we were working with the County and we were going to get a special district formed. He doesn't know where we are with that and also what we are expecting. Lisa can comment in terms of the percentages. Supervisor LaGrange said that he sent an email and believes he emailed the Board or at least sent it to Councilperson Greenberg. He requested for this year, because of the COVID-19 situation and everything that went on, that there was going to be an attempt with the County Legislature, the County Executive, and the municipalities that use the EMS service in the County through the Sheriff and also this would include the State Legislature we would look to get the special district for the County for those that participate as a line item on the budget for the County rather than each of our municipalities having to try and handle it. The reason for that was that there was a tremendous increase last year in all the municipalities that take advantage of that program. They expected a sizable increase again this year and probably again next year, and that was to bring on full-time employees. There were a lot of reasons that we've discussed before. The cost would be incredible and we would all have to bear it. It seemed like we were going along pretty well on establishing that procedure to move toward having it on the County rolls but then of course COVID hit and everything slowed down especially at the County level dealing with the pandemic. So, awhile back maybe July or August he wrote to the County Sheriff's department and also to the County office Tom Cotrofeld. He works with the Sheriff getting contracts together and things like that. He said that he thought we all needed to put a pause on this. He included all the other municipalities in the email and said let's hold this at the 2% tax cap or less. He thinks the ALS came in well under 2%. The EMS originally came in at what they thought was well under the cap but they used the wrong numbers. They used the original numbers that they sent last year instead of the numbers we ended up using. He's repeatedly asked for a correction there. This is on page 196 of your budget. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that it's ALS, EMTD, and New Salem Ambulance. Supervisor LaGrange said that what we did is, because of what they sent us and what we actually had, it would have been from their end almost a 4% increase so we changed that. Again, he's asked them several times to make that correction and he's never gotten a response from anybody. He's left messages and at least two emails after the initial one. He asked Lisa to plug it in at around the 2% cap for the EMT program and that's reflected in our budget.

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Councilperson Greenberg asked if he had written to them and said that our budget is up 2.02% on that line? Supervisor LaGrange replied that he hadn't, but he told them that's what we were going to do. He didn't have an exact figure yet so once we get to this point and get to the Preliminary he will send them a note and say here's what you can expect from us. Supervisor LaGrange added that he spelled out every dollar, what they were wrong on with their figures, and everything else. But, like he said, he never heard back. Councilperson Burke asked if that is the email he sent in July? Supervisor LaGrange agreed adding that it would have been July. Town Clerk Deschenes said that her concern is that the warrant might not come through the way we want it to. Supervisor LaGrange said that it's a contract that we have to sign so there is not much choice there. It is what it is. It's kind of what happened last year and that's why they were confused on their numbers this year. Supervisor LaGrange added that the warrant can come through from what we passed and that's what goes into the taxes, but with what they send us it will just be corrected. He's not going to go through all the other towns to see what they've done with them but it was clear. As a matter of fact the last email he sent was sent back to him when it was opened so he knows they got it. He's left a message. Councilperson Greenberg asked if we have coordinated with other towns that are involved and let them know what we are raising our budget by? Supervisor LaGrange said that he hadn't. Councilperson Greenberg added that they can raise it by the same amount maybe. Supervisor LaGrange said that that was in his initial email to them. The same one that you saw so what they've done he doesn't know but we can check on that, of course. It is what it is. They said they would keep it to a certain number. When Sarah saw that they had put in a higher number, which was what they originally asked for last year, we told them no, that's not what we settled on and here's what it is. We're going with 2.02%. We'll see what happens. Supervisor LaGrange added that he doesn't know what the difference in dollars is. Councilperson Greenberg said that it increased \$12,000. Supervisor LaGrange added that it's \$12,000 total on everything and \$8,900 on the EMT was what they were looking for. Councilperson Greenberg said that he gets that the total increase is 2.02%. Why are we going up 4% on the EMT? Supervisor LaGrange said that he thinks we were just figuring the total package. It went up such a little change in the ALS. He told them that for the total program we wanted to keep it under 2%. The percentage was higher originally with the first numbers they sent us. They were down under like 1% or some crazy thing. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that it's on page 196. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that by using the wrong amount for 2020 they had that they were holding it. That would have been 0.02% assuming that the 2021 proposed that they wrote down is correct for what they were looking for, but you could never find out. Did they truly only want a 0.2% increase which would mean that 0.02% off \$225,592? You never could get an answer. Councilperson Greenberg said that we could go in for that amount and assume that they are raising us by the 0.2% they said they were going to raise us from last year's amount. Supervisor LaGrange said that he thinks we have to figure at least 2%, but what you're suggesting is that we whittle that back a little. Councilperson Greenberg said that he's just asking because they didn't give us a number so we don't know what to do. He's not advocating for either position. He doesn't want to assume that it goes up 4% and then they take 4% from us when they didn't mean to raise it that much. We can leave that number in the budget but when it comes time to negotiate or when we get a contract we should be lower. Supervisor LaGrange said that we can certainly do that. Councilperson Greenberg said that it's just something to keep in mind. Supervisor LaGrange agreed. Greenberg said if the argument later on is going to be that the budget says we were raising it 4%, so they raise us 4%, that's a problem for me then we should lower it now. If the argument later on is that we just put a placeholder in and we think it should be lower, then he's willing to leave that placeholder but he's curious how everybody else feels about it. Councilperson Burke said that she thinks Councilperson Greenberg makes a good point. She doesn't know how realistic that is and whether that would put us in a negative position if we haven't put in enough. Councilperson Burke added that maybe Supervisor LaGrange could make a few more phone calls and see if we can get a more realistic number. Supervisor LaGrange said he thinks the realistic number, what they wanted, was \$234,545 and we're going \$9,000 less than that. Councilperson Greenberg said that it seems unclear what they want. They haven't said. Supervisor LaGrange replied that that's the problem. They base it on the wrong numbers and with a 0.02% increase. That's nice but the fact is they're \$9,000 off to begin with. Councilperson Burke asked how he is concluding that what they want actually based on that would be 2%? Supervisor LaGrange said that they actually were raising it 0.02%. They were taking our 2020 actual as being \$234,502 on that page 196. He's deciphering Sarah's chart here because it was a lot worse when he had it and he didn't see the cleaned-up version. This is a lot easier to read. They were thinking they'd only raise us \$42.87 with a 0.02% increase. In reality, our actual 2020 budget was not \$234,502; it was \$225,592 so they were off in the original numbers they used. That first number was the one they originally asked for, and we changed it on the contract to \$225,592.

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Councilperson Burke asked if that was for last year? Supervisor LaGrange agreed adding that, as a matter of fact, he had to have them change it this year because they sent the contract with the wrong number, too. We sent it back. They've had the right number twice not including the times he's sent it to them since he requested their numbers. Again, that was based on \$225,592, which is the actual and not the \$234,502, to keep the whole thing under 2% or close to 2% we put in 4% there because the ALS only went up a percent. The thing is we could cut it back to the 0.02%. He's guessing they were making a genuine effort there. It seems like they were but with the wrong numbers. He doesn't know. The other thing he could do is call around and find out what the other municipalities saw as an increase in their EMT program. If we're not consistent we could at least see if we could all gain some consistency there. Mrs. Kavanaugh referred to page 196 and said not knowing what the heck they were doing she just assumed that they put in for \$221,000 at \$234,545.71 because it was so specifically \$42.87 higher. When she just did these numbers on this thing, the stuff she typed in, if you left that at what they were really looking for that they really intended to have and what they were budgeting for was the \$234,545.71. That would represent a 3.96% increase. Mrs. Kavanaugh added that she just had to take an assumption that the number seemed so specific. It's not exactly the same, flat; it's an increase of \$42.87 that they specifically had that number in there, but that's a big assumption. She had to work with something so she just put it in. Councilperson Leinung said, "Let me clarify. That \$234,535.71 is the number they gave us for their request, right? We're not extrapolating that number from anything. That's the actual number that was given to us." Mrs. Kavanaugh agreed. The type under it in the slightly larger font is her typing. She wrote "same" under it. Councilperson Leinung said that this is what they sent to us. His feeling is that these are the numbers they gave us. Let's use the numbers they gave us. If that's what they are budgeting in for 2021, that's what they're budgeting in. He thinks he sees the point but he doesn't want to get in a situation where we're guessing what they want. He thinks we just go with the numbers they gave us even if it turns out that they were using the wrong 2020 numbers. He thinks the 2021 number is what they are using for their budget. That's the number. Supervisor LaGrange asked what our actual number is? He then added that we were using the \$234,535. Mrs. Kavanaugh said no. Councilperson Leinung said that we put in more than the \$234,535. We put in 2% above. Mrs. Boehlke said that these were the 2020 numbers with a 2% increase that you told her to put in. Mrs. Kavanaugh asked Lisa if that that would be the \$230,104.39? Mrs. Boehlke said hang on. Supervisor LaGrange said the problem is that we've got the Voorheesville district and we've got the whole town district. Supervisor LaGrange commented that we're talking here about \$81,954.14. Councilperson Greenberg asked what page he is on? Supervisor LaGrange said still on 196 but he has a scratch sheet that he had given to Lisa. Mrs. Boehlke said that she's looking where we jotted down some numbers. Sarah put it in a more legible document. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that she emailed Lisa about it. What you did is what you just said. You took the 2020 true amount which was \$225,592.54 and you increased it by 2%. Mrs. Boehlke said let's keep in mind as we talk to the Board that \$225,592.54 is broken down to three numbers. Supervisor LaGrange added that the village is included. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that you have to do the starting number when you do the split. She started with a 1% increase on the \$225,592.54 which equals \$230,104.39 and then you did the split for the EMT/D and the New Salem Fire part which is also a split because the Village pays 39% of it. She thought the starting number we worked from was a 2% increase on \$225,592.54. Mrs. Boehlke replied yes. Councilperson Leinung said okay. Mrs. Kavanaugh added that she has that although our calculators round differently. She has a starting number of \$230,104.39 and then you did the split. Councilperson Leinung said that we're a little under what their request was. Mrs. Kavanaugh agreed. Supervisor LaGrange added that we have to be because their request was off. So shouldn't we then be \$225,592 plus 2%? Mrs. Kavanaugh said that first you split the Town-wide portion. Supervisor LaGrange agreed adding that that is the \$81,954 and then we have \$90,371 for us as part of the SM. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that she can do the math. Mrs. Boehlke said that the Village was \$56,645.68 at 1.02% making that \$778.59. If you take that number plus our two numbers it comes up to the \$230,104 that we were looking for. Supervisor LaGrange said that the total is still \$230,104. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that's the number you went for in the budget and what it's based on, a 2% increase to the true 2020 and the splits. These numbers that are in the budget match that. That's what happened. Supervisor LaGrange said again this was different on the chart he was given originally. This \$9,000 difference is showing what they're actually asking for, and the 3.96% is not what we are doing. We are doing 2% as he asked. So this chart is a little misleading in a sense. We're not giving them 4%. That would have been the actual increase if they got the figure they wanted. If you look at the EMT they thought it was \$234,502 and they wanted to raise it to \$235,545 saying it was only a 2% increase. It should have been \$225,592. If we were to go with what they asked for it would be a \$9,000 increase which is 4%. We're not doing that. We're doing

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2%. The actual on the page you'll see the total is \$230,104. This chart is a little misleading. Councilperson Greenberg said that he doesn't see that number on the sheet. Supervisor LaGrange said that's not on it. Councilperson Greenberg said there is no way he knows that number unless it's in the budget somewhere. Supervisor LaGrange said that if you added up the budget figures for SM and SA the total would be \$230,104. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that on that sheet all she did was correct them. Supervisor LaGrange said that for our conversation it was misleading and he gets that. This was an explanation of what they wanted and not what we're giving them. The only difference is the SA and SM totals. Those will be our totals and then you still have to add the Village's \$57,000. Councilperson Greenberg said that the percentage is the same so he's happy. He's not worried how much the Village is. It was just the percent that we were raising because our past conversations with the County were that we would try to keep it below the cap. Supervisor LaGrange replied correct and that's been done. Councilperson Greenberg said that what was bothering him was that this was not below the cap. He understands that on the sheet ALS and EMT are combined but they are separate programs. They shouldn't be combined to equal 2.02%. It doesn't matter. It matters what it is individually. Supervisor LaGrange said that it won't equal 2.02% anyway. It will be a lot less than that because the increase in the ALS was less than 1% and the increase in the EMT program is 2%. We're good. It's just that Sarah was trying to explain what they're actually looking for here. What they were looking for amounted to a 4% increase. Councilperson Greenberg said that he understands that and applauds Sarah for that. He's not trying to blame anybody. He's just trying to understand what we are doing. Supervisor LaGrange said that his sheet looked different. Page 196 was much more concise. He knew what was on this one. He was winging it on that one. He hadn't looked at that specifically.

Councilperson Burke asked if we are then looking at the numbers on page 4 for SA and SM? Supervisor LaGrange said let's stick with the back of the budget on the worksheets. It's pages 195 and 197. Councilperson Burke said that that was the summary but in the front it's the same. Supervisor LaGrange agreed. If you look there and go across on SA it's \$81,800. Check out page 28; that might be clearer yet. We have it listed three different places (Page 4, 28, and 195 and 197). Supervisor LaGrange said that if you look at SA4540.4 on page 28 the tentative budget is \$81,954 which we mentioned before. It's only about a \$1,600 increase which is 2% above this year. SM is SM4540.4. That was at \$88,599.66 and went up to \$91,165 but those were their numbers. Supervisor LaGrange said maybe that's something we should be doing. They quote 0.02% in that line. Supervisor LaGrange said that he was back on the ALS. This is 2% again. It goes to \$90,371. So our total is around \$171,000 and the Village has their section. Everything is 2%. Depending on what happens with the County he told them we would do 2% for EMT. Again, he's gone unanswered. Once we get through this and the Board is fine with that 2% increase he will let them know that that's what was voted on and that's what they can expect. In the meantime he'll also check to see what others are doing. He'll probably do a joint email with everybody when he puts his figures in and send them to the Sheriff. Councilperson Greenberg felt that it would be smart to coordinate if we all have the same numbers. It's going to be harder for the County to argue with that. Supervisor LaGrange agreed.

#### B3620 Page 146

Supervisor LaGrange said that Councilperson Hennessy had a question on B fund. He said that we continue to work with a new planner in Building and Zoning. We continue to endeavor to encourage more planning in some of our procedures. We're dealing with the subdivision law and the zoning law. He's spoken to other Board members and Doug knew about this too. We spoke about it the other day. Over the years this has been something that's been out there. Is this the proper time to bring more planning into the picture here? He thinks we have to find out what is going on with the Building Department. He noticed that you lowered the one salary to \$45,000. This is budget code B3620 on page 146. That is the whole Jeff Pine situation. We've talked about looking at other options (a planner here and maybe part-time code enforcement) to take the load off Jeremy on the Planning and Zoning side. He could obviously deal with the code enforcement more efficiently. He thinks this has always been the avenue we've talked about and he thinks it should be brought up. We don't need to insert it yet. This is still somewhat of a dynamic situation. Maybe Doug can update us on that situation if possible or is that something we want to deal with as a personnel issue? Supervisor LaGrange said that regarding that position, there was discussion of a retirement toward the end of the year so that's why we went a little lower for a base salary for someone starting up but we haven't gotten a commitment and the rumblings have been that it might extend into 2021. When it comes to that, whatever happens, maybe we should be looking to make the 2021 rate comparable to

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the 2020 rate because of that and then we have some leeway when and if we hire in a different model shall we say. Councilperson Hennessy said that he doesn't want to keep waiting years. We've been waiting years for this and we keep waiting years so if we don't do it now are we going to have to wait until the budget of 2022? He doesn't have a perfect answer to this. He just wants to keep it on people's radar. If we consider the part-time work there are options that he thinks we need to pursue here. Maybe we just keep the placeholder of \$45,000 and work with that. Councilperson Burke said that she thinks it takes more money to do what Doug is suggesting which is to add to that so it's consistent with what the rate was for this year because we want to make sure we have enough. If there is a retirement, then it's certainly going to be higher but we don't know what that extra piece would cost if we brought them in as staff. She doesn't think lowballing it makes sense. Councilperson Hennessy said that he's fine either way but he doesn't want to be in a situation where we don't have any options. Supervisor LaGrange said that he started to say that we always have the option. A budget is a budget. If we decided with a retirement or a need, the Board can choose to make a budget modification and decide to either use fund balance or something. Otherwise if we were presented with a specific instance and we wanted to do it we could. We've done that on many occasions with things that came up. He doesn't think that inhibits us from moving forward with something when we get to that point at all. Councilperson Hennessy said that if that position becomes part time in March that will be fine. He's not saying that it will be fine but it will not create any difficulties next year. Is that correct? Supervisor LaGrange said that even if it's still full time it won't create difficulties. Councilperson Hennessy said that he understands that part but if we switch this civil service position to part-time in the future what kind of difficulties are there? Maybe that's a Sarah question. Maybe that's a human resources question within the confines of the operation. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that the only civil service impact is that if it's 20 hours per week or more they will have to be selected from a list since it's a competitive title which means it's subject to exams. Councilperson Hennessy asked if the CEO is? Mrs. Kavanaugh replied yes, Code Enforcement. Councilperson Hennessy said that he's talking about a planner. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that if it's under 20 hours per week then it's considered non-competitive. Councilperson Hennessy said that that's fine. He understands the CEO part. Councilperson Burke said that she and Sarah talked and her concern was that if we went to a part-time planner it would put too much work on Jeremy, and so her concern was that we'd have to bring him into the conversation to find out how we are going to rearrange the work that is currently being done with respect to Code Enforcement. In her mind it may be necessary to have part-time Code Enforcement and a part-time Planner and that may be closer to the \$51,499 figure than the \$45,000. Councilperson Hennessy added that that's pretty much what the plan has been without pursuing it strongly. Councilperson Burke added that that's just why she thinks we should put in the bigger number. Supervisor LaGrange said to keep in mind too that we always had \$20,000 towards the planner in the budget since we started this. We're expecting to use \$12,000 this year. Mrs. Boehlke added to look at page 158 which is the backup to the B8020.4. Councilperson Hennessy replied that he knows that that has the planner in it. It doesn't have it itemized but he saw that. Mrs. Boehlke said that the point was because there was not a budget submission. When she and Doug sat down his decision was to leave it at the \$28,256. We left the .4 at \$20,000 which was what was budgeted for 2020 plus if you recall Crystal is no longer being paid as an employee; she's being paid through her firm so she goes on here now. This is \$20,000 for this line. There is \$20,000 still here which again has other smaller line items. What she sees is a fairly large opening to use a planner and keep in mind that we are still paying Nan through escrow for quite a bit. She still thinks this leaves that opening that you're looking for if we plan to bring Nan in more. Councilperson Leinung asked if he could ask a clarifying question here? It's not itemized but what do we normally get for the planner? \$20,000 right? Councilperson Hennessy said that that's on page 158. It's not itemized. Line 10 doesn't have a number on it. Councilperson Hennessy asked Doug who would have submitted that budget. Supervisor LaGrange said that there was no budget submission. Who should have? Supervisor LaGrange replied that usually that comes from the Planning Department. Councilperson Hennessy asked who submits for the Planning Department? Supervisor LaGrange replied that Jeremy does. Councilperson Greenberg added that the Building Inspector submits the budget Bill. Councilperson Hennessy said that he knows that. Councilperson Greenberg said that he's trying to put that on the record. Supervisor LaGrange said that the \$20,000 has been a number that we've used in the budget for primarily the stuff we've been using Nan for. He's talking about the subdivision law and all these other things you've been working on, which is for us the Town Board more than anything else. Anything through the Building Department where she works as a planner is done through increased application fees and escrow amounts. Councilperson Hennessy said that he knows adding to Dan that that's why it's not written in there but he saw the total was \$28,256 so he assumed it was. Councilperson Leinung agreed adding that he

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just wanted to clarify that. That's what he assumed.

Councilperson Greenberg suggested going back to what Bridgit was talking about. She's making a good point. Could Jeff stay for the whole year? Supervisor LaGrange said yes he could. Councilperson Greenberg said that we need to budget. He agrees with Bridgit that we need to budget at his salary and if he retires great, we make up a little and if he doesn't our budget is correct. Supervisor LaGrange said that that's what he was suggesting when we first started talking about it. Between when we submitted this and now he has had a change of heart to some level he just doesn't know. Councilperson Greenberg said that he understands so we need to budget as if he is staying. Supervisor LaGrange agreed. Councilperson Greenberg added that if he doesn't it also helps with what Bill is saying as Bridgit said there is more money to put toward whatever reorganization we do if we reorganize. If Jeff doesn't leave then we've budgeted correctly. Supervisor LaGrange said that Lisa will make that change. We're all agreed on that, correct? Councilperson Burke said yes.

Supervisor LaGrange asked if Councilperson Hennessy had anything else in B. He replied no.

A1680 Central Data Process Page 94

Councilperson Leinung wanted to go back a second and hit on one thing in A that we touched on really quickly. This is for central data process; the videotaping of meetings. Thank you for putting that in there. He remembers sending an email a while ago. He just wanted to point out that this is something that might be good moving forward now that we've done these Zoom meetings. This might be a way to, number one, best practices, open government, and it's great to have natural recording of meetings. Number two is that it might actually help with minutes with the Town Clerk moving forward. We don't need verbatim minutes if we have a recording. The open meeting law says you need minutes and I think there is something out there that says if you have a recording of the meeting you don't need to have a transcript verbatim of the meeting if you have a recording. It might help the future town clerk to not have to spend a ton of time typing up pages and pages of minutes and also for the Planning Board and Zoning Board, as well. Councilperson Greenberg said that he doesn't think it changes anything in that regard because we already record; we just don't video. Councilperson Leinung said that we might be doing this for a while so this isn't something maybe we even will do until the later part of next year, but he thinks this line was from an actual recording of meetings in Town Hall. Councilperson Greenberg said that what he's saying is if we do record those. Councilperson Leinung added that he means video recordings. Councilperson Greenberg added that he's saying for the minutes. It doesn't matter if it's video or audio. Councilperson Burke said that you could put the audio up and the minutes would just reflect the actual motions and things of that nature. Councilperson Greenberg added that he's just trying to say that the video recording isn't going to change what the town clerk has to do. It's already recorded by audio. It doesn't make any difference whether it's audio or video. Councilperson Leinung said that the other piece of this too is that part of this is allowing for live streaming too. This would allow for recording capability in Town Hall which he thinks would be a little more of an expense than this. This is the contract for the service for the live stream meeting. He thinks this is a good start and something we can look at for next year once we start moving back to live in-person meetings. He knows a lot of other towns do it. He thinks some smaller towns record and live stream their meetings too. It's not just the minutes and having it available later on; it's having live stream capability.

Supervisor LaGrange asked if anyone else had anything in A, B, or DB before we go on to the water? Unless you want to go through lighting districts. Everything is pretty much the same. We have talked about the changeover to LED lights. Moving forward we finally got a contract that Michael Naughton is looking over from National Grid for the buyout. It's primarily Clarksville and Feura Bush but also Douglas Lane. We also have some assorted ones. He also added one over by the Hilton Barn intersection with the Rail Trail and Hilton Road. Hopefully those will save us money next year but we had to go with what we have because he thought they were going to be installed this coming fall. That's not going to happen. Hopefully we will see it. We'll keep moving forward at a snail's pace and done eventually.

Page 204 Heldervale Sewer District

Supervisor LaGrange said that this is where Bill and Bill were meeting and discussing this today a little bit. Bill, do you have any thoughts on the discussion today? Councilperson Hennessy said that he didn't. Mr. West reported that part of line 9, Treatment/Disposal Contract, is significantly a piece that is Bethlehem. It might be good if we could break that out somehow in the future as to what the

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charge actually is. Supervisor LaGrange said that we can break it down for our final budget, too. Councilperson Hennessy said that that might be helpful. He did mention that that includes replacement of six units in the budget. He doesn't see us putting together any kind of a bonding arrangement to try and do a larger scale picture before the budget is completed. He thinks a lot more has to happen before we go that route. He thinks we are better off sticking to the way it is. Supervisor LaGrange agreed adding especially at this late stage of the game here. At least we'll have started something and started to make a plan. Councilperson Hennessy said that you have BAN principal down on line 18. He gets that question often as to what bonds are still out there. He didn't know there was any left on the sewer. Supervisor LaGrange said that it shows up on the indebtedness sheet. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that that's for Heldervale Sewer District Extension #4. Mrs. Boehlke added that it's not paid off until 2031. It's \$9,000 per year. Councilperson Greenberg said that that's Creekside basically. Mrs. Boehlke said no. Supervisor LaGrange said Creekside is paying for themselves. Councilperson Hennessy said that he doesn't know what that is. Mrs. Kavanaugh said she doesn't remember. Councilperson Leinung said that if we work backwards it was 2001. Are these 30 year BANS? Councilperson Hennessy said that he doesn't need that now but if Sarah could email it to me that would be great. Supervisor LaGrange said that Lisa is going to grab it while we're on it. Supervisor LaGrange added that that's \$9,000 a year through 2031. It was a 20-year BAN. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that we had the meter pit and that was paid off she thinks. Highway Superintendent Guyer asked if Extension 4 had something to do with Stewart's? Councilperson Hennessy said that this is for sewer. There is no meter pit for sewer. Councilperson Hennessy said that he didn't want to waste our time so she can email him that. Councilperson Leinung asked if that was Stone Creek? Town Clerk Deschenes said that that was Extension 5. Supervisor LaGrange added that those developments paid their own way. Supervisor LaGrange said that this was district specific for some reason that he doesn't know off the top of his head but Lisa is checking on it or we will let you know tomorrow. Councilperson Hennessy said that he's guessing its Mason Lane. Supervisor LaGrange asked if there was anything else regarding Heldervale Sewer. We're going to have to start getting those grinder pumps. Six seems to be a good cut off. He thinks Bill said that's when he starts to get a good discount on them. Councilperson Hennessy didn't know. Supervisor LaGrange said that he thought they talked about it. That's what Bill told him at one time. Hopefully instead of buying one he's getting a reasonable discount and he hasn't pursued it further with other companies. He is going to look into writing up a proposal. We're responsible for the grinder pump unit, but if the housing or the electronics or the pipe going out to the main line has problems we have to be able to know how we're going to handle it and is it better to do it as they go bad or a chunk of them in anticipation? There is a whole lot more to it. That's why he agrees with Bill and Bill West that we should just leave it as is and try to figure out a course of action for next year.

Page 205 Clarksville Water District

Supervisor LaGrange said that he'd just highlight one particular thing here. Number 15 is a new hydrant at Winnie Road. As Bill West has been looking into things, and with the way we are able to flush lines and things like that he feels that it's important to start to address certain spots especially in the Clarksville Water District where we should be installing hydrants. This probably wasn't done to keep the costs low back when the original work was being done. That's just one of the different things on here than the usual stuff. Councilperson Hennessy said that it's a terrible thing to say to Lisa because we've been doing this forever but why don't we do like the other line items where we have 2020 next to 2021, prior year versus the proposed year? Mrs. Boehlke said that we do that in the front budget. Supervisor LaGrange added that you have that up front in the first few pages like page 4. Councilperson Hennessy asked if that's too much or if it doesn't fit. Councilperson Leinung asked if he was talking about having it itemized as we did in 2020 versus 2021. Councilperson Hennessy said yes. He's been here long enough to know better. In many of our other items we list the prior year's budget. Supervisor LaGrange said that he's talking about when we get down to specific things. In the front it shows the general difference between 2020 and 2021. Councilperson Hennessy replied that he knows that. Supervisor LaGrange said you're looking for more of the specific line items compared. Councilperson Hennessy said that typically would be personnel items where we list prior years and proposed years. If it's too much to ask then he doesn't want to do it. If we don't do it for everything fine, don't worry about it. Supervisor LaGrange said if there's one thing in particular check page 31 in the front and that will highlight what you just said. Councilperson Hennessy said that he's done all that. He looks at the old budget in another computer in comparison. When we deal with people's salaries we always have the prior year listed on the exact same sheet, one column prior so it's easier for the people reviewing. He can look at the prior

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budget on another computer and that's fine. Supervisor LaGrange said again that it's right here in the front on page 31. Councilperson Hennessy said that it's easier for him to look on the computer than turn 5,000 pages. That's okay. Let's keep going. Supervisor LaGrange asked for any other questions or thoughts on Clarksville Water District. As he recalls, Bill is looking at a little higher cost on the water districts for testing. Councilperson Leinung said that he knows in general that there is more testing that has to be done. There are more mandates for testing. He doesn't know how much more it costs sampling-wise but maybe he has to do a little more sampling than normal. Supervisor LaGrange said that that's exactly right but that's our wells and our water sources. Mrs. Boehlke said that Bill West has requested, and she believes that Samantha has already done it, that we change laboratories. He's done testing cost comparisons. He feels that they were too high. He had other vendors that he worked with in the past and he's gotten us some better prices. Hopefully we will see some positives come from that through the end of this year into next. Councilperson Leinung added that there are a couple of new drinking water councils that recommend it. Every year there are going to be a couple more things that we have to test for. Again, he doesn't think you can take extra sampling but prices and costs will probably go up a little bit. Mrs. Boehlke said that she's already seen that he's more on top of the timetables. He's looking forward. We just did a bunch of stuff. Several of our districts have been given bottles. It's quite the task to get taxpayers willing to get up in the morning and run water in this bottle before they make coffee or something. He did get enough people to do it so we're on top of that.

### Page 206 Colonie Country Club

Supervisor LaGrange said that Colonie Country Club is on the next page with a similar breakdown. Are there any questions there or comments? Councilperson Hennessy said that it looks like the big increase was due to electric telephones. Why would that be if we're getting water from the village? Councilperson Greenberg said that on line 10 it went up \$10,000. Mrs. Boehlke said that line 10 is source/supply. Mrs. Boehlke said that she will change that; it was an oversight. That is what we are paying to the Village. It is with those other costs. Councilperson Greenberg asked why it is going from \$35,000 to \$45,000? Mrs. Boehlke said that there are more people, more homes, and more irrigation. Keep in mind that they will also see a larger revenue source. We budgeted for \$41,000 this year and she's estimating that we're going to get \$65,000 in revenue. Supervisor LaGrange added that it's amazing the irrigation that goes on over there and plus they've added new houses all along. It's pretty close to being built out. There might be one or two left. Mrs. Boehlke added that hopefully we'll start to see that even off after they get that first or second bill. Once they've gotten their lawn established we highly recommend they get close and personal with their system so they understand what they are doing. It doesn't go off in the rain. I have physically seen them sprinkling in the rain. We do try to educate them when they call.

### Page 207 Feura Bush Water District

Supervisor LaGrange advised that Feura Bush Water District is next. Councilperson Hennessy said that this is an 11% increase from last year and the source didn't really go up. The BAN went up a little. Supervisor LaGrange said that their participation in the new pickup truck is part of it. Councilperson Hennessy said that this is going to lead into a question for three of these districts. We spoke a little bit about it on the phone. He'd like Lisa to explain it to everyone in addition to him. It's going to be Feura Bush water, Heldervale water and Northeast water. Those districts all went up large amounts. In the one worksheet we had, their individual district charges went up. The increase/decrease column on the tax assessment worksheet was 35%, 55%, and 8%. How is that going to relate here and how is that going to relate with rates if we're going to try to increase rates on these things?

Mrs. Boehlke said to start with Heldervale because it's the hardest to recall and remember. Back when we took out debt for Heldervale water a year ago (she'll use an example but it's not an accurate example). Let's say we had a capital project for which the Board authorized \$100,000 in debt service. Let's say we only spent \$90,000. This is prior Boards and it's prior to us. An amount of \$100,000 was still taken out in debt service and it was hanging out in the Heldervale Water District. For years she kept asking Mr. Purinton what we could do with it. He said we can only pay down debt. In her unknowingness we didn't do anything. Finally she said to Mr. Purinton that we have to do something. So we decided to take that extra money, and she thinks it was over two debts to be honest, and it was in the tens of thousands. What we did was we took that money that the district was already paying on and used it to pay their debt. So for a couple of years the district users did not pay anything on their January tax bill because this money we already had paid those bills for them.

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It's all we could use the money for so we used it. We used it up. If you look page 4 and go to the Heldervale Water line, in 2020 we charged those taxpayers \$7,526.95. It was probably around a \$12,000 debt payment. We used the balance of that money to pay part of it and we charged the district users the other part. This year there is no more of that money left so that full debt service is being charged to the residents. It looks like a big increase, but the debt service is really not an increase. We just have to start charging the users again because that other money ran out. Supervisor LaGrange said that it's reflected as a percentage increase over last year. Mrs. Boehlke said it is because obviously they are going to notice it when they get their bill that it went up but if you go back to that service page, Heldervale has had a \$10,000 debt service payment plus interest every year and they will pay that through 2028.

Councilperson Hennessy said that Feura Bush was an 11% increase and Heldervale was 4%. They are paying so much now and he's curious if this is going to reflect another 10% increase in rates? Mrs. Boehlke said that debt service and usage are going to be billed differently. Debt is going to be on the January tax bill based on the assessment that you have. Usage will be based on all the other things listed on page 207 that is not debt service related. Feura Bush in 2021 did go up. The prior year was \$18,573 and this year it will be \$21,310. Let's not forget that we are still in a capital project for Feura Bush for serious line problems and more to come. So what we are doing is watching some of their debt reduce on some of their older debt and we're bringing new debt on hopefully to keep them fairly static. We don't want to add to it. It may have to depending on how far that project goes. It is a little higher for debt service for Feura Bush and then you have to plan on how they are going to repay that other debt and will have to make that decision. Supervisor LaGrange said that it's higher than last year but it was lower than the year before. The debt payment was going down. That was one of the discussions we had with Feura Bush when we were replacing that 800 of line and the communication device on the meters. We were anticipating that the original bond was going to be satisfied next year, actually two years; \$750 are left this year and next year on it. We are hoping that we are going to be bringing them back under what they used to pay. It's just a jump this year because last year was that much lower, but from 2019 to 2021 we are down \$4,000. Mrs. Boehlke said just to bring that full circle before we move on to Northeast, Feura Bush and Heldervale were two districts that most of this Board took a strong line on to raise rates to pay back some of the usage debt they have had. We are doing very well with that repayment. The position that we took was a hard hit on them for sure from listening to taxpayers. Feura Bush was \$115,000-\$125,000 in the hole. She's estimating that at the end of 2020 they will be \$25,000 in the hole. It's a huge repayment that's happened and we're getting to where it should be ground zero and building up a little bit. Hopefully we can adjust some of those rates back if possible. That was our goal in the beginning. Heldervale as well has gotten to a point where they've got a little money in the bank. We will talk about that when we talk about rates this year to see what we can do. Again, she thinks it would be beneficial when you start looking at this to pull up the indebtedness sheet because we do try and look 10-15 years out with some of these things as we try to give you information to make decisions on further debt issues. Again, she knows it's not easy to hit this once a year and recall. That's why we try to give you these hopefully supporting documents. Great question.

Now the interesting part with Northeast again is that she's looking at this indebtedness schedule. Northeast went up this year mainly because they had what she calls an accelerating bond issue. In 2019 and 2020 the debt payments on that bond were \$40,000 each. The last two years of the bond, which are 2021 and 2022, they are \$45,000 each so that debt will be paid off. That's how it was scheduled when it was originally set up probably in at least a 20-30 bond issue. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that it was 30. Mrs. Boehlke said that at some point she thinks it was \$30,000 and \$35,000 and then it went up to \$40,000 and the last two payments are \$45,000. When you go to the indebtedness again as those two things fall off you still have additional debt that needs to be BANNED for the tank repair that we did. Again, she knows there are some other things that might come up with that project and other ideas for Northeast. She's had calls lately from people who thought this debt was almost paid. It is almost paid, but there are two more years on that bond. Supervisor LaGrange added that nothing is forever. Mrs. Boehlke added or something else pops up. Does that hit what you needed her to go over? Councilperson Hennessy replied yes. He's just trying to relate A to B to come up with C, that's all. Mrs. Boehlke said that she'd rather the questions. She's in this all day and the Board is not so she'd rather some clarity if she can.

#### Page 208 Font Grove Water District

Supervisor LaGrange said that there is nothing to really highlight here unless there are any questions.

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He says that but we haven't spoken much to Bethlehem recently because of all that's going on. One of the things they'd like to see us do is get a master meter there and do something with the end close to Heldervale. The other thought is that maybe it could tie into the Heldervale Master Meter. Who knows? That's been kind of put on hold for now.

#### Page 209 Heldervale Water District

Supervisor LaGrange said that we kind of just went through this. Are there any other questions on that?

#### Page 210 Kensington Wood Water District

Supervisor LaGrange asked if we raised them up last year in rates? Mrs. Boehlke said that New Salem and Kensington were the first ones we had the ability to set rates on first off, and they are doing well. She's pleased where they are headed. Obviously Kensington has a long way to go. Councilperson Hennessy said that it went from \$22,000 to \$29,000 mostly because of the increased water usage, correct? Mrs. Boehlke said that it's going to be more people, more usage, and let's not forget that we spread everything out on a percentage basis. So, whereas they have a smaller percentage of people, insurance, and vehicles last year they are going to take on a higher percentage as they grow. That also takes a little bit of a percentage off each of the other districts. We review this at least every six months. It's a fun project. Again we really believe that a benefit district is just that and those that benefit get charged. The more people that they add the more percentage they will pay. Councilperson Greenberg said that Lisa alluded to this a second ago. We set those rates at Kensington not really knowing how the system was going to work. We're on target and we are comfortable where we are and we don't need to adjust up or down? Mrs. Boehlke said not with water. Let's talk again when we get the sewer district. She's hoping we get enough good information from how they are working it now. We have a brand new system and a fund balance of \$29,000 for the water district based on where we are. Obviously it's a very large system and if it had a problem it's a big district and it would be a big cost to replace or repair something. Again, she feels very comfortable with the path this is on. Councilperson Greenberg said that in general we try to have a fund balance of \$40,000-\$50,000 in a district. Is that correct? Mrs. Boehlke said that that's a great question. She wishes she could get that definitive an answer from the Comptroller's office. Water districts are different. Again, do you look at it in percentage of the overall budget which is what a lot of people do? Do you look at it as overall percentage of replacement of a system? Again, she thinks that on a new system like Kensington with a current budget of \$29,000 people might say \$29,000 is too much. She disagrees. When we get our first true problem we will need that. Obviously Doug and I and know it will be Bill because he does have a lot to say about budgets and rates. We will sit down and start to look at rate projections for the upcoming year. We have adjusted some down. We may look at that. Again, she'll be interested to hear what Bill has to say about new systems and projecting on that with both Kensington and New Salem.

Councilperson Hennessy asked if there is a new line item here for engineering (line 12)? That was not in prior years. Is that kind of the start of a need or usage in a district? Is it something that Bill West suggested? Mrs. Boehlke replied that it was a Bill West suggestion. She has his submission so she's going to see what it says. Bill is definitely of the belief that every district should have an engineering line whether it's new or not. Councilperson Hennessy said he hears that; he's just curious where it came from. He was guessing Bill West. But there is no anticipated specific need at this point that you are aware of? Mrs. Boehlke said no but he would like to have someone available to him if he feels the need to contact them. Councilperson Hennessy said that he agreed. Supervisor LaGrange said obviously we all know the situation that Northeast is in. We've had engineering line items in the districts before. Councilperson Hennessy said that this is the first one. He's just checking; that's fine. He just didn't know if we had anything specific that we're going for. He's fine with it. Supervisor LaGrange said that Mr. West just wanted to start dropping it in and that made sense.

#### Page 211 Northeast Water District

Supervisor LaGrange didn't know if there was anything to highlight here. Councilperson Hennessy said that it's 10% from last year but we know we had all kinds of issues that we had to deal with. The bond went up \$5,000. Mrs. Boehlke said that you should also take into consideration that her estimate for 2020 is \$91,000. She's just saying there are some increases. Again there are a number of numbers that she makes comparisons of before she and Doug talk. We come to a medium we can agree on. Supervisor LaGrange added that part of the driven-up numbers was when they had to

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switch over to the Village. That was an unexpected water cost that they didn't plan on. Mrs. Boehlke added that we just did it again so her estimate to where she said we're going to add to fund balance may not happen based on this most recent storm and the panel problem over at Northeast the switching over to the Voorheesville water system again. Councilperson Hennessy asked if she said that she estimated that 2020 is going to be \$91,000. Mrs. Boehlke said that that's correct and referred to page 42. On page 42 it tells you that she is expecting \$91,000 but if you go back to page 41 where she estimated Source/Supply, Power, Pump is \$3,250 for 2020. She's estimating it's going to be \$8,940 because of the number of times we've had to hook into the village and how quickly that escalates when they bill us as one user. Councilperson Greenberg said that that's news to him that we just hooked back into the Village. What was that about? Can he have a quick update? Supervisor LaGrange said that when the storm hit the generator didn't come on. There was a problem with the generator. Councilperson Greenberg asked if we lost power at our pump stations? Supervisor LaGrange said that that's correct. We switched right over to the Village and we thought when the power came back on everything was going to be fine so we turned the water back on, or we shut it off in the Village and started up at our end. All of a sudden we got decreased pressure and it turned out that something in the control panel Lisa was talking about a moment ago was fried in it. She guesses it's not a major cost. It wasn't a major cost so it was fixed but they were on for probably 3-4 days, something like that, on Village water. She's already spoken to the Mayor and one of the people on their council. They agreed that they would go back to the 1.25% instead of twice the amount like they did for us the last time we had an emergency there. They didn't pass anything yet because they hadn't met but the Mayor took a quick poll of the other members and they said that was what they were going to do. Again, we thank them for that. It's been good that we've had that resource there if we need it. In this case we needed it.

#### Page 212 New Salem Water District

Supervisor LaGrange said that we dropped New Salem's rate. Just like Kensington Woods, we were winging it in a sense with the rate and so forth. It's done well and they started to build up a decent fund balance. It's a new system. If you might recall back in January we knocked \$0.50 off their rate per thousand. They are doing well. They have an \$80,000 fund balance right now.

#### Page 213 Swift Road

Supervisor LaGrange said that this is the budget. They don't have a BAN or bond at the moment. This was one of our big challenges during the power outage because they don't have a tank to work off and they don't have a Village of Voorheesville to tap into. They were down for a couple of days. Thankfully National Grid focused on getting this corridor together because we have the four water districts and a sewer district. They were able to get it up and running but there was still a lot of discussion about a generator. Bill West has been looking into a generator. He thought he had one a couple of months ago but it turned out that it was too big for what we needed. He is still working on that. We still have a water main that's probably going to have to be replaced at some point too. So, for the budget we are what we are here. Are there any questions on that? Councilperson Greenberg asked what fund we have in that district. Mrs. Boehlke said that it's a double-edged sword. Supervisor LaGrange said that it's complicated. Mrs. Boehlke said that \$46,000 is what she estimated at the end of the year. We have it hanging out there for those pumps that we are still going back and forth on with the vendor. We had anticipated to pay part of it from fund balance she believes. We do have a capital project out there that we could tap into if we need to but again we're still waiting for a decision on what of that we will be responsible to pay. Supervisor LaGrange added that if we do put a generator in that we'll end up having to go into the capital project he's sure. Councilperson Hennessy said that that should be an easy grant from a storm-related concern for a generator there somewhere. Supervisor LaGrange said that he'd like to see it. Hopefully we can find it. Mrs. Boehlke added that everybody is looking for grant money, as well. Supervisor LaGrange said Clarksville is in the same boat except they need two generators but at least they have a tank.

#### COLA

Supervisor LaGrange said that he thinks the next agenda item might be a potential for a COLA this year. He sent out some information for any decision making. Bridgit had some thoughts on the 1.5% cost of living increase. Councilperson Burke said that the actual Albany cost of living increase was 1.5%. Her recollection of what Doug sent around was that Social Security is using 1.3%. She would propose we use the 1.5%. Supervisor LaGrange said that he and Adam talked about it earlier because we were both concerned about the budget and where we will stand at the end of the year with all this stuff that's going on. We were kind of hesitant about any COLA because of how we handled things

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during the pandemic. We allowed for people to stay home. We didn't have to lay anybody off. We had both luck of the draw in retirements and careful planning with the paving and things like that, again, as always thanking Kenny for that. We came out of 2020 estimating in really good shape. He'd really be surprised if there is any municipality that came out of 2020 as well as the Town of New Scotland. When we put the budget together and then found out we were going to be about \$34,000 less in DB because of the health insurance estimates we had an opportunity. He's not as pessimistic as he was my any means. His feeling is that we can probably do something. He thinks someone said at the last meeting that if we can do it now, we might not be able to do it next time. It's good to do it when we can. He will say one thing though it's a little bit skewed. On the sheet with the Social Security versus the Town's COLAs over the years he just wants to say one thing that he should have remembered in the past. It shows us at about a 4.7% deficit in a sense compared to social security. Over those years from 2008 to 2020 we're separated by about a 4.7% amount. Back in 2011 or 2012, he can't remember which, the reason we didn't do a COLA that year was because that was the salary scale year and there were a lot of raises that came out of that to some degree. The Board at that time decided not to do a COLA then. He doesn't remember which year. If it was 2012 that would account for 3.6% of our difference. In 2011 both social security and we were a zero increase. He wanted to be sure that people know we are not far behind social security because of that. We can't really quantify it in a sense. It was considered an increase with the salary scale changes. He can't tell you everybody or everywhere but that was what the Board decided at the time. Because of those changes we didn't do a COLA. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that she remembers that the zeroes in 2011 and 2012 were because of the crash in the sales tax increases. That was from the severe economic downturn in that time period. Supervisor LaGrange added that the other thing too is that this year we've already seen a bump over our estimates for sales tax. If we see a similar bump or better in the last quarter we're in even better shape. Remember, we were projecting a 10% decrease both in the third and fourth quarters and it end up being 4.5%. Supervisor LaGrange said that this is the Board budget now. We will plug in those new sales tax numbers for revenue in 2020 for estimating for the year if that's good with everybody. Does anyone else have an opinion on COLA? He doesn't know if he gave one. He thinks he's more inclined to do it than he was three months ago. Councilperson Leinung asked if we could just go over what the differences would be and what the total cost would be. He has the sheet here but he just wanted to make sure that he understands it completely. He thought there was maybe some adjustment. He wants to make sure that he fully understands. Just adding these up and, again, he might be working off an old sheet, a 1.5% would be about \$30,000. Is that about right? Supervisor LaGrange replied correct, adding across the board. Councilperson Leinung said knowing that we did make some other changes tonight even with the health care cost being significantly lower than the original budget if we did the 1.5%, an extra \$30,000, some of that would be covered by this gap and then we would still be taking from fund balance correct? Supervisor LaGrange agreed. Councilperson Leinung said that we probably would have added a little bit more tonight too with the Code Enforcement. Supervisor LaGrange said that that was about \$6,000. Councilperson Leinung said that that's another \$6,000 that we otherwise would have had to account for. He kind of goes back and forth. We are apparently lucky that we didn't have to lay off anybody or cut anyone's salary and we were pretty flexible. On the other hand, we're in a good position to give these COLAs because we can work this into the budget. Our biggest hole in the budget next year would be a loss in sales tax revenue. That's the thing we can't necessarily predict plus there are other costs that come up. He guesses he's inclined to do the 1.5%. That's less than we did the past couple of years. He thinks we've done 2% the past few years. That's close to the social security. He thinks we're in a position that we can do it and we're not being irresponsible about it. He thinks it's something we should consider and he would lean toward doing that. He's open to hearing other people's thoughts too. Supervisor LaGrange asked for Bill's or Adam's thoughts. Councilperson Greenberg said that he guesses he sees both sides. He's okay with however the Board wants to go with this. He would just say that we should keep in mind the counterargument that we don't know what next year is going to bring and we could be in a lot of trouble, who knows. It could be worse than this year. We don't know. That being said, once we give a COLA increase that COLA increase goes on forever. There is no taking it back. He would just say he's always looking toward the future and what's coming next. It's not so much what's happened; it's what's coming next. He thinks there is a lot of uncertainty out there about what the next year is going to bring. He just thinks we should be particularly careful about spending money. It's fine. She gets Bridgit's argument and he largely agrees with it that 1.5% is the cost of living increase in Albany but there are taxpayers to think about too. They have the 1.5% too and we are already raising their taxes 3%. Does that balance out? He can see an argument on either side of that. He would be lower than 1.5% but he's fine with 1.5% if that's how the Board wants to go.

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Councilperson Hennessy said that he's not a supporter of 1.5% or even above 1.0%. He originally was that way more and more in light of that fact that we haven't laid anyone off, we didn't give any furloughs, and we had people working from home. That was somewhat beneficial yet on the flip side we had to utilize COVID requirements at the workspace and that became difficult. He fully recognizes that. In the past he's said that he didn't think the elected offices should get raises if we're taking money out of reserve funds. We're not taking a lot out of reserve funds here this year. Significantly we are out of B but that's our sales tax receipt fund and we still are taking it out of reserve fund. He's reserved in offering a COLA for that reason but he does know that there are many people out there that are not making near what they should have in 2020 or what they anticipated and they are hurting. It may not be good form for us to have the high-level COLA raise or even any raise some would argue. Most people in the private world are not making what they did last year. We're not asking people to earn less. So, he's very hesitant to do the full COLA. He's hesitant to go above the 1%. He recognizes the work ethic and he appreciates their work effort in these times. Some towns tried to reward their employees because of it while other towns laid people off. It's a tough thing. For that reason he doesn't support anything above 1%. Councilperson Burke asked of it is possible to budget for 1.5% but in January only give 1% and then we'd see some months into the year where we are and perhaps give the rest of it. Councilperson Leinung said that if we did that then maybe we would take this into account for next year if we ended up doing the 1%. We'd take that into account next year when we're doing the COLA and maybe phase in a little bit more. Adam did not want to cut in here but he wanted to reply to parts from Bill. He thinks Bill makes a good point in that there are a lot of other municipalities that aren't giving a COLA at all. He knows the State has a hiring freeze and a salary freeze right now. He thinks the State is in a much worse position than the Town of New Scotland. That's the flip side there. Getting back to the numbers again so we know the difference between 1.5% and 1% he thinks 1% is about \$20,000 as opposed to \$30,000. That's an extra \$10,000 that we would not be taking from the fund balance if we do 1% versus 1.5%. Supervisor LaGrange added to keep in mind that it's different fund balances too. Just to address the pessimism, remember we budgeted \$105,000 in fund balance use in A this year and we're actually going to add a few thousand to A. We budgeted zero use in B this year and we're going to add substantially somewhere over \$200,000 when we get all done. Councilperson Hennessy said that we are appropriating \$369,000 from B this year. Supervisor LaGrange said that was for 2021. We're going to be adding about \$200,000-plus to the fund balance in 2020. Councilperson Hennessy said that he thinks we've been scheduling appropriating almost every year and yet in the end we always add almost what we were going to appropriate. Supervisor LaGrange agreed. Councilperson Hennessy said that he gets that. Supervisor LaGrange said that we are comfortable. The thing that triggers him a little bit is seeing people leave or get enticed from other areas to rob our highway. He thinks this is at least a morale booster too for everybody to see that we are doing our best to keep things going. We still need to address the salary scale sometime too which we were going to do this year and it obviously got postponed with the craziness. Councilperson Burke said that she also thinks that when we think about the furloughs and things like that to some extent that was to our advantage more than it was to the individual workers. At that time when we were first bringing up that question how we would furlough people they would make more on their unemployment benefits. Many of them would have made more on their unemployment because of the subsidies than they get from our pay. Mrs. Kavanaugh added that we don't have unemployment insurance so it would have been a direct hit. Generally we hardly ever had to pay any unemployment for 20 years. If we had furloughed people and had to pay unemployment we would have had a significant hit. It wouldn't have been like free not paying them. We would have been paying the unemployment insurance amount all of a sudden. Councilperson Greenberg said that he just want to chime in on more things here and remind people that Doug is right. New Scotland is in good shape on this budget relative to a lot of other municipalities but we need to keep in mind that we significantly cut back services this year. People are paying their taxes and they are getting less and we're going to give a COLA out to workers. It's another way to look at it. It's not like we had a normal year with the services that we gave and we have a budget surplus. We did okay this year because we cut way back early on when we saw this coming. Does everyone understand that we cut back services? Councilperson Burke said that she does understand what Adam is saying. Supervisor LaGrange said that we cut back services but he doesn't know how much we cut back. We still attended to the people here at Town Hall. We didn't pave, of course. Councilperson Greenberg said that that's a major part of what we do. Supervisor LaGrange agreed. Councilperson Burke added the availability of certain services such as being able to go into town hall, the use of the park and things like that. She thinks Adam has a reasonable point there. Supervisor LaGrange said that compared to other towns we opened up a lot earlier too. Councilperson Greenberg agreed adding that he's talking about the paving as well. The

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whole shebang. He doesn't want to argue about whether or not we cut back services. We cut back services. We had to. Everybody did. He's not suggesting that we shouldn't have. He's just saying that we did cut back services and we still taxed people basically the same and now we're going to give COLA increases to all of town staff or we're talking about that. This is just another thing. We might be doing that next year too but we don't know yet. Supervisor LaGrange agreed. Councilperson Leinung said that the other aspect here too is that this is just a tentative budget. Supervisor LaGrange added we are working on the preliminary now and as soon as we get these last few things tied up Lisa will input all of this stuff and we'll have the preliminary budget that we introduce to the public on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Councilperson Leinung said here's the thing. Putting this in again we can still hear from the public. We can hear and make a change. We just need to kind of figure out what our position is for now going into the preliminary budget. We might get more information. It's only a few weeks but we might get more information and we can always make the case before passing the final budget too. As of now he thinks he'd be good with a 1% just because it's something. It is below the COLA and it is below Social Security and he thinks we do need to be cognizant of next year because we don't know what's going to happen. We need to be conservative in our budgeting here. He would go for 1% for this for now. We always hear and he kind of want to see where all these numbers end up too, to see when we're finalized and all the numbers are set before we make last minute changes to see exactly what that means. Councilperson Burke said to Dan's point, she thinks that if we are really looking for comments it's unlikely that people are going to come in and comment that it should be more. She thinks putting in at least the 1.3% consistent with Social Security gives people an opportunity to actually comment on whether they are concerned about us giving a COLA. Councilperson Hennessy asked for Doug's and Adam's thoughts. Supervisor LaGrange said that he thinks 1.3% might be a good compromise and it matches Social Security. Guilderland and the County apparently are doing 2% and Bethlehem is doing zero. He doesn't know what that means. It is what it is. Councilperson Hennessy asked to have those repeated for him. Supervisor LaGrange said that according to Peter Barber the Town of Guilderland and the County are doing a 2% COLA and according to Adam Bethlehem is doing zero. Councilperson Greenberg agreed adding that that's the last he heard unless something changed for some reason. Supervisor LaGrange said that he didn't check since Adam had found that out. He checked with Peter and that's the information he got from him. Councilperson Hennessy said that he's still fine with 1%. He still thinks it's better to be less than what the others are. It indicates a more realistic view of what's happened to the rest of the world out there. Councilperson Greenberg said that he leans toward 1%, as well. Councilperson Leinung said same here. If we look at it we could bump it back up after getting all the finalized numbers. Supervisor LaGrange said that we will get these put together and get them out to you. We would have to make a change to that probably before the public hearing wouldn't we? We wouldn't want to do it after. Councilperson Leinung said that we have to do it in the preliminary. Town Clerk Deschenes said that the 1%, if that's what you decide on, is what would go in the legal ad if you are authorizing that for the elected officials too. Councilperson Hennessy asked what is the budget reflecting now if anything? Supervisor LaGrange said that the budget doesn't reflect COLA anytime. We never put that in the budget. It's something to decide after the budget is set but it is absorbed in the grand scheme by the surplus for the pickup, the savings in health insurance, and the sales tax too. Councilperson Burke said that she'd be comfortable with the 1.3% if we excluded elected officials. Councilperson Hennessy said one of the things is, and Doug you substantiate it, is it feasible to not do elected versus the general employees? He doesn't think it worked. Councilperson Greenberg said that it's just a minimal amount of money that we're talking about. It's a political show more than a budget thing he would say. That's the first way he would answer that. The second is that if Bridgit is pushing to do more because the cost of living in Albany has gone up and you think people should get that then he doesn't understand why elected officials differ from employees. Councilperson Burke said that she's just trying to find a compromise. She thinks it should be across the Board at 1.5% but she's concerned that if we just make it 1% it's going to be a real hardship on our workers and we're not going to get comments that will change that because it's not going to go higher after the public hearing. Councilperson Hennessy asked Doug if he was going to chime in on this? Three have already said 1% anyway. Supervisor LaGrange said that that's a good point. He's not going to vote no on 1%. He was agreeing with Bridgit in a sense on the 1.5% and thought 1.3% was in the middle and matched Social Security. That seemed like the more in-between thing. If three out of five want to do 1% he's not going to vote no. The difference between 1% and 1.3% is a couple thousand dollars maybe. It will be so minimal. We've added to fund balance where we thought we'd take \$107,000 out of A. As he said when he first started talking about it with Adam and his discussions back three months ago he could argue strongly either way. He thinks 1.3% might resonate better with the

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employees. Councilperson Hennessy said that it would, of course. Councilperson Greenberg asked how it would resonate with the taxpayers. Councilperson Burke said that a lot of taxpayers now really believe that we should be paying people for what they are worth and not making their actual income less and less every year. Supervisor LaGrange said that he was going to make the point that taxpayers are expecting us to have a crew out there pushing snow and things like that. He's not going to quibble. Whatever we all can decide on. If it's 3-5 he'll go along as the 4<sup>th</sup>. He would think probably as a midpoint or compromise 1.3% might be the answer because that's what Social Security is doing. We could keep talking about this for the next hour but he doesn't want to. Councilperson Greenberg said that we're talking about \$6,000. He agrees that he really doesn't want to debate this any longer either. He just wanted to point out the pros and cons. Supervisor LaGrange agreed adding that that's what we're here for.

**Resolution 2020-217**

Councilperson Leinung offered the following and moved its adoption:

Resolved that the Town Board of the Town of New Scotland does hereby agree to a 1% COLA.

Councilperson Hennessy seconded the motion.

Supervisor LaGrange said that it's three to one. He goes along with it. He's not going to quibble over 0.3%. He thinks it would be better but he'll vote yes.

Councilperson Greenberg wanted to make the point that a lot of people got significant raises of 5%, 5%, 8% or even more. Supervisor LaGrange replied sure, level changes. Councilperson Greenberg said to answer Bridgit he doesn't think anyone is trying to take advantage of employees. He would say just the opposite. He thinks we've been very good to our employees.

Councilperson Burke said first to address what Adam just said, there were a number of people who didn't and I don't think anyone on this Board wants to take advantage of employees but she thinks we forget about the real cost of not doing a COLA. Given this is all we are going to get, I'll agree.

A roll call vote was taken:

Supervisor LaGrange	<u>Aye</u>
Councilperson Greenberg	<u>Aye</u>
Councilperson Hennessy	<u>Aye</u>
Councilperson Leinung	<u>Aye</u>
Councilperson Burke	<u>Aye</u>

All present and voting, the motion carried (5 Ayes)

Supervisor LaGrange said that we will slide in a 1% COLA on salaries. We are going to get all this together, put a bow on it, and call it the preliminary budget. We will get those sheets out ASAP.

Supervisor LaGrange added that he made a mistake and he will readily admit it. He put down the COVID meeting on Friday for 1:30 PM. He won't be here next Friday and he thinks Diane is out too. If you want to have one this week he thinks we have to fine tune. He hopes you've had a chance to see Sarah's correspondence. She did a nice job of trying to put something together for us to pass on a resolution on how we're going to handle when a child has a test pending and things like that. We've run into that twice now in the last couple of weeks in the Highway Department with different things that could come up. Sarah put together something using the state and federal law as kind of a basis. He knows that Dan has looked at it. He doesn't know if two days is enough to act on it. Michael is looking at it too. We don't have any scheduled meeting until the Public Hearing on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Councilperson Greenberg said that he's happy to meeting at 1:30PM if it's a short meeting because people aren't ready then. He thinks we should move ahead with it. Supervisor LaGrange asked if everyone is available at 1:30 PM. Everyone agreed. Supervisor LaGrange asked everyone to try and review Sarah's efforts there and maybe suggest any changes or ask any questions because he thinks it's an excellent start at a policy for this timeframe. He talked to Michael earlier today and he was going to take a look at it. Maybe if there is nothing to change or manual stuff we could pass a resolution and implement it for the next situation that comes our way. Otherwise he's good. Mrs. Kavanaugh said that the two items that she said in it was really that reason 4 that has come up. Like she said she's not a mind reader. She reads the minutes and things like that. That seems to be a thing

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that you were looking at. Also on reason 5, which is really more the expanded FMLA issue, that's also a 2/3 thing. She explained the implications of that. Really those are the only two to act on. She does advise that we should set that policy on the expanded FMLA as to whether we're going to require the employee to use time to bring that up to 100% full pay or if you can pay them that or they should use the time or we can leave it up to the employee. Those are the options on that one. On Friday he just through a resolution together but Michael Naughton will be far better at putting it into an actual resolution-type form. Supervisor LaGrange said to take a look. Councilperson Leinung said thanks Sarah for doing that. He thinks it helps frame the decisions we have to make pretty well for Friday. Mrs. Kavanaugh said she did look at the State, as well. The State passed their legislation early in April while it was pending about what the federal government was going to do. The State doesn't really change anything. It's less generous in a way. It only deals with the employees themselves being quarantined. There really isn't any impact to what you're considering. Supervisor LaGrange said for everyone to commit to going over that. Michael will be here on Friday and maybe we can get something done and have it out of the way. That would be great to have our policy set and not out there not knowing what we're going to do.

**2. Adjourn**

Supervisor LaGrange made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilperson Burke. The meeting adjourned at 8:39 PM.

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Diane R. Deschenes, Town Clerk