



At the long table, left to right, Ben Bartlett, Tiler Eaton, John Morin, Donna Danis, Tony Dumas, and Interim Town Administrator (IAT), John Scruton. With her back to us, Betsy Warrington.

Nottingham Board of Selectmen Workshop December 5, 2022.

Steve Soreff, MD

Following a cold but sunny late fall day, the Nottingham Board of Selectmen (BOS) met Monday at 6:30 PM in the form of a Budget Workshop on December 5, 2022, in the Community Center. This meant the sole goal of that session was to look at the 2023 Town Budget and keep it within the 4% Tax Cap. For the record, here is the [COVID -19 report](#) for Nottingham: 1-4 new cases in the past 14 days; 1193 total (1 new) as of December 5, 2022. Present were all 5 members of the Board, Ben Bartlett, Donna Danis, Tony Dumas, Tiler Eaton, and John Morin, as well as the Interim Town Administrator (IAT), John Scruton. Also, there was Betsy Warrington, the Town's Bookkeeper, and this reporter. The minutes were being taken remotely.

After the Pledge, the BOS reviewed the entire 2023 Town Budget line-by-line. There was an initial discussion as to whether BOS would that night meet the 4% Tax Cap or come as close as it could. Let us see how the evening went. All agreed that the new target goal was to eliminate items to reach cutting \$164,500 from the Town Budget. Its plan was to look at each item to reduce, transfer or eliminate tonight by consensus and take a vote on all of them at the December 12 meeting. The BOS noted the 4% Cap was very challenging in the face of inflation, supply chain problems, labor shortages, and rising wages.

With the line item approach, the BOS first looked at the executive area. It set the maximum Town Administrator (TA) salary at \$105,000. It wanted the \$23,000 telephone bills identified by source. It restored the \$5,000 for Lake Hosting Program. It reduced the number of Annual Reports printed to 250, thus saving \$1,900. In the Town Clerk items, the BOS articulated

the idea that should be no salary increases for elected officials, which included members of the Select Board. In the category of Elections, it sought clarification of how election workers' payments were less while the Supervisors had increased. The Supervisor of the Checklist will address that at the December 12 meeting.

The BOS left Town Audit costs alone as well as the Assessing items. Tax Collectors' fees would go to the town and those positions would be on salary. It cut Legal items by \$10,000. In Personnel, it was noted higher rates for health insurance. The retirement contributions for police and fire were up 51%. In Planning, it dropped membership in Strafford Regional Planning and cut funds for the overdue Master Plan as well as conference attendance. For Town Hall, there were concerns about the increased costs of electricity and heating as well as maintenance. It left Cemetery, Police, and Fire items alone. It wondered if Animal Control should be under the Police Department.

The BOS then looked at the Highway department items. It cut mowing costs by \$10,000, some vehicle maintenance funds, and road grading items. It will put \$100,000 into a Road Reconstruction Warrant. It was concerned with the maintenance requirements for the new trucks. About the Recycling Center, it focused on having to rent a backhoe at \$5,000 a month.



The Highway Department's newest truck with its driver Matt Pitkin at Holiday Parade

It left General Assistance and Social Services funds alone. It recognized these recipients were Nottingham residents who are most vulnerable. In Parks and Recreation, the BOS moved the following items of lifeguards, gatekeepers, the salary of the Assistant Director, and scholarships to the Recreation Revolving Fund. It removed repairs to the Bandstand. It moved part of the Recreation's floating maintenance worker's funds to the Town Hall maintenance area. It left lines for the Library, Conservation Commission, and Historical Society alone.

At the end of the day, the BOS was \$73,000 over the Tax Cap. It awaited the [New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration's](#) (NHDRA) final tax rate determination which was due Tuesday, December 6, 2022. This did not happen on that day.

At the next BOS, Monday, December 12, 2022, will vote on these changes.

