

**TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Monday, April 5, 2010**

Bob _____
Joanne _____
Keith _____

Final _____
Accepted _____
Accepted as Amended _____

Present: Joanne Randall, Chairperson; Keith Cota, Vice Chairman; Bob Blodgett; Darlene Phelps, Recording Secretary

Also In Attendance: Kathy Bailey; Betsy Bosiak; Mary Frambach; Andrew Walton; Nancy Wheeler; Debbie Tibbetts; Barbara Clark; Dave Fiorentino; Dave Goulet; Steve Allard

6:15pm Joanne called the meeting to order and asked Darlene to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Joanne made an announcement that due to the painting in the building, there are no public bathrooms available.

6:30pm **Staff Discussion** – Nancy said a State auditor will be here tomorrow and Wednesday, and will be using the lunch table in the office while the conference room is being painted. The auditors will also be here (in this Conference Room) all next week. Nancy also clarified that the minutes from last week stated that last year the Police Dept. and Road Agent received a salary increase, when actually it was the Police Dept. and Fire Dept., not the Road Agent, and the increases were in the same percentage range (13% - 17%) for both departments. Nancy has provided the appropriate default budget figures if the BOS decides to transfer funds from the default budget line to line in order to grant salary increases. Nancy said she spoke to Gary Perry this week regarding the damage caused by the storm. Debbie presented a comparison chart for moving expenses from McLaughlin Mayflower and Starving Artists Movers, and a proposed floor plan for the new office space (if that's the direction that is taken), all of the office staff had input in the design.

FOR SIGNATURE

1. **Accounts Payable** – was signed.
2. **Manifest** - was signed.
3. **Payroll** – was signed.
4. **Abatement (3)** - Keith made a motion to deny the abatement request for Lot U3-39 as recommended by Avitar. Bob seconded the motion. All in favor. The other two abatement requests were approved last week & signed tonight.
5. **Veteran's Exemption** – was signed.

FOR DISCUSSION

- A. Appoint ZCO Committee for elected option** - Based upon the Town Vote of Warrant Article 9 which requests a study for changing the Zoning Compliance Officer from an appointed position to an elected position. Joanne noted that the BOS needs to develop a Charter so the committee for this specific purpose to include the number of committee members and a timeline needs to be determined.
- Dave Fiorentino asked if the vote made at the deliberative session was binding because he feels the intent of the Warrant Article was changed significantly because the Warrant Article was written to change the position from appointed to elected – and it was changed to “form a committee to determine if it’s in the best interest of the Town to change the ZCO position from appointed to elected.” Dave, Andrew & Len all felt this change to the wording was not appropriate. Joanne & Keith both stated that Town Counsel did not indicate there was an issue with this change nor did the Town Moderator and they feel comfortable moving forward.
- It was decided to allow people to sign up for the committee before May 14, and their appointment papers will be signed on May 17, for a 6 month term, ending on November 17, 2010.
- Andrew and Len feel it’s inappropriate to have any Town employees on the committee. The BOS feels it would be inappropriate to have the current ZCO on the committee, but not necessarily *any* Town employees.
- These meetings will be open to the public, and minutes of the meetings will be required. There will be advertising for committee members on the Town website and in the free publications we can advertise in (Suncook Sun, Hooksett Banner, and Town Crier).
- B. Marriage Vote** - As a result of the Town Vote to ask the State Legislative members to allow the people in the State to vote on the definition of marriage. Joanne will ask Deb to develop a letter to be sent to our elected State Representatives in compliance with the vote of the town. Debbie will be asked to call some neighboring towns to see if they have sent a similar letter. Keith requested that the letter include the number of votes for and against the article.
- C. Default Budget** – Keith recapped the discussion from last week regarding the BOS consideration for salary increases to full time employees. Nancy has determined the actual amount needed for a 4% increase for full time employees is \$27,544.00. Joanne said she has been approached a couple of times lately by people asking why only full time employees are receiving salary increases, and not including permanent part time employees. She was also

asked why everyone was receiving the same amount and she responded that the Town does not have a formal Merit Increase plan and this was the fairest way. She said the line has to be drawn somewhere, and no matter where the line is drawn some people will be left out.

Dave Fiorentino expressed his concern that as a member of the Budget Committee, he is fielding questions from taxpayers who are concerned that the COLA is -1.5% and the Town is granting 4% raises. Joanne feels that if we do not give raises we will begin to lose employees, that the employees need to be compensated and rewarded, and this is not raising anyone's taxes. Dave also noted that the money is being taken from the Highway Dept., and Joanne said the money that is being transferred from the Highway Dept. because there is excess money in those lines that was not requested by the Highway Dept.

Mary Frambach also stated that although she feels the employees may deserve these raises, the BOS should have included these raises in the proposed budget. The Town voted on the Default Budget the way it was, and it did not include raises. She noted that as a retired person she has not received an increase in 2 years. Keith stated that the Default Budget was not voted on by the Town and is to be managed by the BOS should the town not support the proposed budget. He also noted that the default budget is not presented in detail form like the proposed budget to the public.

Andrew asked if the money could be taken from any other department – as 50% of this money is coming from the Highway Department. Joanne stated that the money was more than what the Road Agent originally requested for 2010 budget on those lines.

Len asked the BOS to really consider a cap for increases. He's appreciative of Town employees, but thinks over the past couple of years the percentage of increase is very high. Keith said the high percentage was originally only for the PD, which was part of a 3 year plan to upgrade the overall salary to competitive range within the local towns. Dave said salary is not the only thing that's creating a loss of employees in the PD. He said the Town Employees are doing a good job, but the economy dictates that they should not be getting an increase.

Betsy asked about the step increase plan for the PD, and indicated that there are no job specifications or job criteria for new PD employees as in other towns. She asked what the percentage of unpaid taxes for this year, and asked if the rate of foreclosures is high in Epsom. Joanne noted that this information is not readily available. Keith reiterated that the BOS is working within the default budget and making prudent decisions to manage the town.

Joanne said the replacement cost of employees is very high. Betsy agreed that our Town Employees are high caliber, but said that there are plenty of high caliber employees looking for jobs.

Joanne said she'd like to move forward as previously discussed – and feels the BOS has taken the public's concerns into consideration.

Keith Motioned to transfer \$8,100 from General Government Building Line 01-4194.1-411 (GGB Heat and Oil), \$4,054 from Welfare-Vendors Policies Line 01-4445.2-417 (Mortgages), \$6,890 from Roads Maintenance Budget 01-4312.4-310 (Engineering Services), \$4,000 from Roads General Administration Line 01-4312.6-635 (Fuel/Diesel), \$3,500 from Roads Part Time Position Line 01.4311.4-150, \$1,000 from Welfare-Vendors Policies Line 01-4445.2-811 (Food & Non-food) for a total of \$27,544 to provide for an overall 4% salary increase with adjustments for social security, Medicare and retirement contributions for all full time staff members under the following account numbers;

01-4130.2-110 Secretary Administrative (\$2,730)
01-4130.2-220 Social Security (\$0)
01-4130.2-225 Medicare (\$0)
01-4130.2-230 Retirement Contributions (\$241)

01-4140.1-130 Town Clerk (\$812)
01-4140.1-220 Social Security (\$0)
01-4140.1-225 Medicare (\$0)
01-4140.1-230 Retirement Contributions (\$74)

01-4150.1-110 Financial Administrative (\$1,533)
01-4150.1-220 Social Security (\$0)
01-4150.1-225 Medicare (\$0)
01-4150.1-230 Retirement Contributions (\$141)

01-4150.4-130 Tax Collector (\$812)
01-4150.4-220 Social Security (\$0)
01-4150.4-225 Medicare (\$0)
01-4150.4-230 Retirement Contributions (\$74)

01-4210.1-110 Administrative/Chief (Police) (\$2,432)
01-4210.1-220 Social Security (\$0)
01-4210.1-225 Medicare (\$35)
01-4210.1-230 Retirement Contributions (\$343)

01-4210.2-110 Full/Time Positions (Police) (\$3,834)
01-4210.2-220 Social Security (\$0)
01-4210.2-225 Medicare (\$55)

01-4210.2-230 Retirement Contributions (\$534)

01-4210.5-110 Administrative Assistant (Police) (\$1,446)
 01-4210.5.220 Social Security (\$90)
 01-4210.5-225 Medicare (\$21)
 01-4210.5-230 Retirement Contributions (\$134)

01-4220.1-110 Full Time Positions (Fire) (\$7,509)
 01-4220.1-220 Social Security (\$0)
 01-4220.1-225 Medicare (\$80)
 01-4220.1-230 Retirement Contributions (\$1,344)

01-4311.1-110 Road Agent (\$1,873)
 01-4311.1-220 Social Security (\$0)
 01-4311.1-225 Medicare (\$0)
 01-4311.1-230 Retirement Contributions (\$163)

01-4311.2-110 Full Time Position (Road) (\$1,123)
 01-4311.2-220 Social Security (\$0)
 01-4311.2-225 Medicare (\$0)
 01-4311.2-230 Retirement Contributions (\$102)

for a total of \$27,544 to include retroactive to the first pay period of 2010. Bob second the motion. All in favor.

Andrew asked if it's accurate to say that the Default Budget was \$27K too high. Keith responded that there was \$27K available from the Default Budget for the BOS to determine the most prudent use for managing the town functions.

D. Properties to Deed in May – It was decided to ask Dawn to be present next week to address any questions from the BOS on this.

E. Whitehouse Acres – Common Land:

Barbara Clark said on March 31 David Goulet representing Whitehouse Acres came into the Town Office with a check for \$1630, and the deed to be recorded. According to Barb, because the deed was not transferred by April 1, so the common land will be not tax for another year. She has returned the check to Whitehouse Acres as the town is not able to hold the payment. The taxes would have been roughly \$650 for this year. This is just an estimate as the revaluation is taking place this year. She indicated that they intend to put the property in Current Use when the transfer is done. Town Counsel has concerns with the way that the deed has been worded. The Town Counsel has a question regarding "Conservation Easement" that should be included in the deed. Barb does not feel the BOS can take any action until Town Counsel gets back to us with feedback. Joanne said the BOS may wish to have a Non-Public at the end of the night to discuss an email that was recently received by Attorney Soltani.

Dave Goulet said he gave Barbara the Quick Claim Deed, and asked if it has been sent to Tony. He said it took longer than anticipated to get the paperwork to their Attorney to write up the Deed. Joanne said a letter was received from Atty. Soltani just tonight stating that he has a number of concerns. Atty. Soltani would like to contact Whitehouse Acres attorney to discuss these concerns. Dave agreed with that. He apologized for not getting this completed earlier on. Joanne advised Dave that due to the delay in processing the land exchange before April 1st, there would be an additional tax amount for this year of approx. \$650 that the BOS will need to reach agreement on, and that the deadline for Current Use has been missed. Dave agreed that the amount to be paid to the Town can include the estimated property tax for 2010.

- F. **Request for Charitable Exemption – New Rye Union Congregational Church** – Keith made a motion to approve the Charitable Exemption for the New Rye Union Congregational Church on Tax Map/Lot # R2-41. Bob seconded the motion. All in favor.
- G. **Request for Charitable Exemption – Evergreen Lodge No. 53** – Keith made a motion to approve the Charitable Exemption for the Evergreen Lodge No. 53 on Tax Map / Lots U14 – 27 & 28B. Bob seconded the motion. All in favor.
- H. **NH DOS Major Disaster Declaration – Applicant Briefing Meeting** – There are two being held in the Concord area: April 9 @ 1:00 PM & April 14 @ 7:00 PM at the NH Fire Academy. Joanne suggested to Bob that Gary Perry might want to attend this meeting.
- I. **Letter to Governor Lynch – Suncook River** – Keith prepared a draft letter for the BOS's consideration to be sent to Governor Lynch in regards to the recent failure to obtain federal funds through FEMA. Len Gilman asked how much money has been spent on this. Keith said the total amount has been about \$40K in grant money has been spent with the Town having spent about \$16,000. This mitigation grant that the Town was recently denied was a 0% match grant. Len asked if it would be appropriate to have the affected landowners send a letter at the same time. Keith said he would encourage landowners to send a letter themselves. This letter will be forwarded to several elected Federal and State officials. The BOS consensus is to have Debbie print on Town letterhead & Joanne will sign for it to be mailed.
- J. **NH DOT Interim Inspection of Municipal Bridges** – The NHDOT recommends that the bridge on Mountain

Road over Blakes Brook has no posting requirements and on Echo Valley Road over Griffin Brook be posted as E2 and be posted as a one lane bridge. This will be forwarded to Gordon Ellis for action.

MINUTES FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- **Final – March 15, 2010** – Keith made a motion to approved these minutes as written. Bob seconded the motion. All in favor.
- **Final – March 22, 2010** - Keith made a motion to approved these minutes as written. Bob seconded the motion. All in favor.
- **Draft – March 29, 2010** – Keith made a motion to approve these minutes as amended. Bob seconded the motion. All in favor.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION (No action required)

- **Letter from ZCO**
- **Powers & Duties of Towns RSA 31:95-b Appropriations for Funds**
- **Response to Senator / Representative Letter** – A letter was received from Jack Barnes in response to our letter regarding placing the tax impact on the ballot. Senator Barnes will be inquiring with the Attorney General's Office and will seek legislation for towns' authority to place the tax impact on the ballet.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE BOARD

Liaison Reports

Joanne said there was a Hazard Mitigation Plan quarterly meeting on April 1st, and a few items were discussed. The next meeting has been tentatively scheduled for July 22 at 7 PM at Town Office.

SVRTA meeting will be held on 4/15 at 7 PM in Northwood. They will begin discussing insurance, among other things.

Joanne hasn't heard back from the PD on their ICS 200 training.

Keith did not have any liaison report.

Bob said last week the Highway Department began roadside mowing, and hand clearing ditches. The weight limit signs have been removed. The new decals are on the Highway Department vehicles.

Public Comment:

Dave Fiorentino indicated that he wishes BOS draft minutes would be posted on the website.

Betsy said she just learned about an RSA that allows the Town to do involuntary lot mergers to get rid of grandfathered/ substandard lots. She thinks it might be worth looking into. Keith said he'll pass this information along to the Planning Board.

8:23 PM Joanne made a motion to go into Non-Public under 91A:32E. Bob seconded the motion. All in favor.

8:30 PM The BOS came out of Non-Public Session.

8:30 PM it was decided to place the Epsom Shops Mall on the agenda for next week, and invite the landlord to be in attendance for a concept discussion regarding the possible Town Office move to that location.

8:35 PM Keith made a motion to adjourn. Bob seconded the motion. All in favor.