

Bob _____
Joanne _____
Keith _____

Accepted jmr/kac/rb
Accepted as Amended _____

**Town of Epsom
Board of Selectmen
Monday, October 13, 2008**

Present: Bob Blodgett, Chairman; Joanne Randall, Vice-Chairman; Keith Cota; Betsy Bosiak, Acting Recording Secretary

Other Attendees: Andrew Walton, State Representative Carole Brown, Joni Kitson, Nancy Wheeler; Marylou Keane; Ken Michael; Keith Yeaton; Julia Cotter; Greg Gersby; Herb Bartlett; Tim Harkness; Harvey Harkness; Rick Bilodeau; Police Chief Wayne Preve; Fire Chief Stewart Yeaton; Lee Bartlett; Greg Foss; Mike Sargent; Fire Captain Matt Moulton

6:15pm Bob Blodgett called the meeting to order and asked Joanne to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

FOR SIGNATURE

- 1. Accounts Payable was processed**
- 2. Manifest was approved**
- 3. Posting for Election was approved**
- 4. Petition and License for Buried Cable**

The Board is requesting more information from the Road Agent.

- 5. Letters regarding Buy-out/Hazardous Mitigation**

Joanne noted the Town did not qualify for the program. She noted the residents are receiving letters informing them of this.

6:25pm Fire Chief Stewart Yeaton and Captain Matt Moulton – 911 Mapping and Final Layout

Captain Moulton explained the 911 mapping that has been completed, noting what has occurred in the past eight years in its development. He had several forms for the Board to sign accepting the mapping and other obligations regarding the information from the State.

Keith asked what the process would be to pass the information on to only the proper people under the Right to Know. Matt noted the State does not want Towns to sell the information.

Keith asked how information would be updated; Matt noted they have forms to complete for new construction with satellite changes to occur once a year. Matt noted change of residents would be completed through new landline telephone services. Betsy Bosiak asked what if residents only have cell phones. Matt noted they have problems with those and residents with digital telephone companies; the State working on a solution for these issues.

Joanne asked the amount of money the Town has spent for the mapping with Matt noting it was all paid for through grants. Joanne asked how questionable addresses get fixed, Matt indicated a physical check is completed and some change of addresses may be required.

Joanne made a motion to accept and sign all the forms, Town Data Request Form, Data Capture Acceptance Letter, Acknowledgement of Non-standard Address Form and Data Release Agreement. Keith seconded the motion. All in favor.

6:34pm Staff Discussion

Barbara Clark noted the staff did not have any discussion items.

6:34pm Traffic Circle

Julia Cotter, Millican Nurseries, Inc. noted the plan for the landscaping of the center of the traffic circle was completed and approved by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. She noted the Board had requested they return with the final design.

Mike Sargent will be overseeing the site work with Greg Foss hauling the fill and loam. Bob asked where items would be coming from; Julia gave the Board copies of the list of donors. Greg Gersby, Pellettiere Associates explained the design. There will be a 25 foot ring of grass around the outside with ramps from Routes 4 and 28 to draw the eyes to the center of the circle. River Birch and Pin Oak trees will be planted.

Julia noted Millican will care for the trees and the State to mow the grass. They are hoping other volunteers will assist with the care of the material. Keith noted he had chatted with two vice presidents of the Lions Club, asking if they would be willing to assist. They felt the Lions Club could establish a fund to have someone assist with maintenance.

Keith asked the amount of material and when it would be delivered. Greg Foss asked when the Board would want it done. Peak traffic times at the circle were discussed with a schedule to avoid those times worked out. Julia anticipated the work to be completed by November 1st.

Joanne made a motion to have the town office do thank you letters to the people donating to the project. Keith seconded the motion. All in favor.

Town Department Heads Budget presentations

6:50pm Chief Wayne Preve – Police Department

Chief Preve reviewed the proposed Police Department budget and answered questions. Chief Preve has increased his overtime line and would like to cut the part time line. He noted other towns are paying part time officers \$15.00 to \$16.00 an hour with Epsom's highest paid officer receiving \$14.40 an hour. Due to the two vacant positions insurance was computed for two additional family plans.

Keith discussed the possible increase in the equipment line to purchase replacement bullet proof vests and upgrade older PC's. Chief Preve noted he was involved in a 50/50 grant for some vests this year and they also have the Morrison funds that he has been trying to reserve for future use.

Chief Preve noted overtime pay for holidays is now included in the budget, it never was in the past.

Chief Preve noted he has discussed with Keith potential increases in wages due to the loss of officers. He noted most of the officers can go elsewhere for more money. He should have approximately \$10,000.00 this year remaining in the salary line due to the loss of officers which he would like to give five staff members a pay adjustment of an additional \$2,000.00 each. He has a draft Warrant Article that includes a three year step plan for wage increases. The increase would be 10% for 2009; 8.8% for 2010 and 2011. This increase would bring Epsom's salaries up to average to the surrounding communities. He felt the step increases would be more appealing to the voters.

Keith noted the Board has a priority need to look at the salaries of the current officers as contracts for two officers are up in the summer of 2009. The Town needs to look at keeping the

current officers. Keith would prefer to put the 2009 salary increase in the budget as it is what is needed to operate the Town.

Joanne noted she felt the same way last year, agreeing with putting the money in the budget. Chief Preve noted you don't see people at the deliberative session, expressing his opinion that SB2 is killing the Town. He noted the Town is short on officers and he is burning the current ones out.

Joanne noted she is aware of a growing support to reverse SB2. She questioned if a three year salary adjustment would be easier to sell as a package if it is presented as a Warrant Article that could be discussed at the deliberative session.

Keith noted that was done last year with the voters turning it down. Keith liked a multi-year adjustment because if it is approved then the money would be in the default budget for the remaining years. Keith recommended the Board include the proposed multi-year increase in the budget and conduct discussions with the Budget Committee as to the best approach to bring to the town voters.

Chief Preve noted he needs the Budget Committee and the Board behind the Department for the salary increases.

There was a Board consensus to put what is needed in 2009 in the budget.

Keith asked about making the salary adjustments in 2008. Chief Preve said he would not do it before December to be sure there was money to cover the costs.

Keith noted they would need an official request later this year to adjust the police staff salaries and should be effective for the last pay period of the year as a minimum.

Chief Preve presented a proposal for increasing the Town's share of the health insurance and/or the buyback for long term employees in lieu of a longevity payment.

Keith questioned when the Board would have to adjust the budget to reflect the additional payments. Nancy Wheeler noted the Board would have to adopt the changes in this year's budget as the adjustments will affect the insurance lines.

Keith suggested they obtain the cost numbers to see how it would affect the 2009 budget.

The Town's cost portion of the insurance payments would increase periodically from the Town paying 75% to 80% and then 85% based on years of service. The buyback would go from \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 with a maximum of \$4,000.00 based upon years of service.

7:50pm Fire Chief Stewart Yeaton

Chief Yeaton noted he did not have the COLA figure, but used a proposed \$1.50/hour salary increase across the board. He noted he computed full time salaries with a 48 hour work week although most employees work 50 to 54 hours a week. The full time employees have asked him to put in another Warrant Article. After discussion Chief Yeaton determined he would remove this figure from the budget. He will just put the COLA of 6% in the budget and do a Warrant Article for the \$1.50 an hour increase.

Chief Yeaton has cut some of his lines to make his budget work. He presented the remainder of his budget, explaining the changes. Chief Yeaton has reduced the use of the Station by private organizations to try to limit heating costs.

Keith requested to see a breakout of the salaries for the 4 full time employees, review the gas and oil lines and heating oil line.

Chief Yeaton discussed purchasing a command vehicle with the Reid donation. He noted the public hearing was held to accept the money but now the Board has to hold a hearing to let the Town know how they want to spend the money.

Joanne suggested Chief Yeaton bring all the items he wants to expend the Reid donations for to one public hearing, noting that each time a hearing is scheduled it costs the town time & money.

Nancy Wheeler noted if the money is not spent by December 31st or added to one of the Fire Department funds, it would go into the general fund surplus. A Warrant Article would be required to spend it from either Fire Department Fund. Expenditures of unspent money would need approval of the town after 12/31/08.

Joni questioned if the Board holds a public hearing to purchase a command vehicle and residents are against the purchase, how would the Board address this. She speculated that the people may want the money to go toward the ambulance fund, asking what the Board would do in that case. Keith indicated that it will be the ultimate decision of the Board in conjunction with the Fire Chief as to the means to use the funds for the town people. Given the recent rash of natural disasters, one could see the need for better response to emergencies that a command vehicle will provide.

Nancy reiterated the RSA governing gifts which says the Selectmen have the authority to accept and spend unanticipated funds, but must hold a public hearing to notify the people what it will be spend on.

8:37pm Rick Bilodeau – Emergency Management

Rick presented the budget for the Emergency Management Department. He noted the training courses are to be presented by Lee Kimball and other courses that could be presented at a later date. Lee Kimball could also update the emergency management plan with Rick saying the idea would be to have everything completed by one agency.

Rick would like to purchase a computer and portable printer for recording and updating information. He would also like to purchase a camera and a set of ICS vests to be used during a disaster event by the town officials. The 13 vests would cost \$1,172.50.

Rick noted he is requesting consideration of a Warrant Article in the amount of \$20,000.00 for grant matching funds.

Keith asked if some of the budgeted items could be purchased using grants. Rick felt emergency management should have a computer. Keith asked if the grants were 50/50. Rick noted they vary from a 50/50 match down to 5%. He can not write grants until he has money for matching funds. Accepting grant money would not be just his decision. In discussions with Joanne she suggested this money be set up in a Capital Reserve account.

Keith said as a voter he would like to know what types of items could be pursued by grant applications and how they will be used by the Town. Rick said it could be for anything the Board would like. One of the first grants he would suggest would be a large portable generator for the school or any other building used as a shelter. Keith requested Rick give some thoughts to the list of items to support the request for Capital Reserve for Emergency Management.

The Board took a break from 8:58 pm to 9:04 pm.

9:04 PM

BUDGET DISCUSSION

1. Additions for General Government Buildings

Joanne indicated that she asked George Carlson when the Meetinghouse might be ready in 2009 and what might be needed for utility expenses. George indicated it may be ready for some events by next summer. They need to have Gordon consider plowing the area this winter for winter access, no telephone is required, heat and electricity should be budgeted the same as the Town Hall. The Meetinghouse would most likely need to tap into the Library's water as the water main is across Route 4 and would be too expensive to tap into. He indicated for budget purposes the Town may need to reimburse the Library for water.

Keith noted to heat the Town Hall it took approximately 1,300 gallons of oil costing about \$5,000.00 with electricity being about \$600.00 for a total approximate cost of \$5,600.00 (for a nine month period). Joanne requested Nancy add these figures to the appropriate budget lines.

2. Stanchions Rental/Purchase

Bob felt Gordon had traffic cones that could be used for stanchions at the election. At this time Bob felt they did not need to rent any items.

3. Winterizing/Not Winterizing of Old Town Hall

Keith had the summary of expenses and income. Joanne added that most of the time the board waived the rental fee. At this time he noted the Town paying a lot out for a rental space that is not being used at the current time. He felt the Board will need to consider the best approach to either use or close up the facility during the winter months unless the revenue supports the yearly use.

Bob questioned if the building is not heated what the deterioration would be.

Keith wants to maintain the building but if the Town continues with a default budget they might have to increase the fees to cover the costs or consider not using the building during the winter months.

Joanne has written a Warrant Article to increase the tax exemption for the elderly based upon the 2005 Warrant Article. Keith suggested they work through the rest of the budget and know the number of Warrant Articles before they take action or this one.

FOR DISCUSSION

A. Request to Post Bridge

Bob noted the request was from the Road Agent to post the Echo Valley Farm Road Bridge at 20 tons due to the deterioration under the culverts.

Keith noted this is more restrictive than the State's E-2 rating. He would like more supporting information from the Road Agent as to why he would like to post the bridge at less than what the State recommends. This has been inspected by the State recently.

Joni noted this could restrict the construction on Griffin Road as the contractor is hauling material using this road.

There was a consensus to table this item until the Board has more information from the Road Agent.

B. Chadwick-BaRoss

Keith noted Gordon needs to return the bill with the reasons why the Town is not paying it and that Chadwick-BaRoss can appeal the decision to the Board of Selectmen.

Joni asked Bob and Joanne if they had seen the backhoe before it was returned, neither had. It was suggested that photos be taken of equipment before and after to avoid similar situations in the future.

C. Fire Auxiliary Request

Joanne reviewed a request from the Epsom Fire Auxiliary to set up a table at voting to sell trivets.

Keith noted per the New Hampshire Election Procedure Manual, this decision was up to the Moderator if civic booths could be set up at elections. Keith reviewed that section of

the manual under "Electioneering.". He suggested the request be directed to the Town's Moderator.

DISCUSSION - FOLLOW-UP

1. **Code of Ethics (Waiting on Town Counsel)**
Keith spoke with Attorney Soltani and indicated that Tony will be sending the Board a letter with his opinion.
2. **American Red Cross**
3. **CASA**
The Board will wait for the budget to be completed before acting on these requests.
4. **Homeowner Letter – Godin**
Bob reviewed the information. Keith asked if the Board needed to respond. Discussion focused upon the understanding as to when the drain pipe was installed by the State DOT. Keith suggested a response should be sent back for the property owner to direct that question to the State DOT who undertook the work with the drainage fixes along US 4/202.

MINUTES FOR REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- **Final – September 29, 2008** – Joanne made a motion to approve the final minutes of September 29, 2008. Keith seconded the motion. All in favor.
- **Final – September 22, 2008** – Joanne made a motion to approve the final minutes of September 22, 2008. Keith seconded the motion. All in favor.
- **Draft – October 6, 2008**
- The Board reviewed and amended these minutes.
- Joanne made a motion to approve the draft minutes of October 6, 2008 as amended. Keith seconded the motion. All in favor.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION ONLY (No action required)

- a. 1st NH Legislative & Business Summit on Work & Family
- b. LGC 2008 Wage, Salary & Benefits Survey for Municipalities
- c. Town of Allenstown appointment of Tom Gilligan as Town liaison to Epsom's Suncook River Avulsion Solution Sub-committee
- d. Town of Allenstown act as Applicant on CDBG Grant
Keith noted Steve Couture recommended Epsom send a letter to Allenstown asking them to be the applicant as they have a better chance of success. Keith presented a draft letter for the Board's consideration and requested a copy of the executed letter be sent or faxed to Steve Couture also.

Keith received a request from Steve Couture that Epsom contact the two owners at the river avulsion to determine their willingness to allow some type of property rights released (conservation rights) for the Suncook River's new river course.

- e. OEP – Stay Warm NH – Governor Lynch Winter Response Letter
 - f. Belknap – Merrimack Counties Community Action Program
 - g. Executive Council District Two News Release Newsletter
 - h. NHDOT FFY 2008 Competitive Local Grant Application Period
 - i. UNH & NHDES Water Plan Survey
- Joni asked Keith if he had received this survey as it had been sent to her. She replied she was no longer a Selectman without opening the survey. Bob noted he could not open the website link in the email. The office was also copied on the survey email. Keith indicated that he has not received the survey request. Joanne has received it and completed the survey.

Old / New Business

Joanne noted last week the Board met with Joel Robinson, telling him they would get back to him in two weeks. On October 9th Mr. Robinson came into the office requesting copies of the minutes of August 7, 2006 and RAC minutes of the same time period. Mr. Robinson also requested copies of the Board of Selectmen Minutes for October 6th. He was instructed that the Minutes were in Draft form and were not final. Mr. Robinson was told that the Board was looking into his request and he told the office staff that it was “easier to go to court.” Joanne suggested the Board send a letter saying they would be meeting in 2 to 3 weeks and if he is going in a different direction to let them know.

Keith suggested they continue and review the information. They should meet with Mr. Robinson in two to three weeks and present him with the approach the Board plans to take.

Joni noted she was on the Board when Mr. Robinson was told the culvert repair would be done. Mr. Robinson has seen there is no money and the work will not be done. Joni noted every time it gets bad in that area the Town goes up and makes repairs. Joni felt it might be better to spend a larger amount of money and repair the problem.

Keith noted he is looking to understand the history with who made the commitments and why. He feels the Town may be responsible for the Heath culvert as it is part of the Town's Right-of-Way for the cul-de-sac. Keith noted the other two culverts are clearly private and questioned why the town even repaired them. Keith noted the Town did work on the upper culvert and due to the culvert not working properly; it could be cause for concern.

Keith suggested that once the Board has a clear understanding of the history that they make two copies of the information and give one to Mr. Robinson. Keith felt if the Board agreed to expend public funds, it should be conditioned as a onetime repair.

Joanne received an e-mail from Dawn Blackwell. A teacher would like to use some of the voting booths for a mock election. There was a Board consensus to allow them to be used for the mock election.

Joanne noted that Gordon would like to consider using some of the material at the Meetinghouse site for sand this winter.

Bob noted the material had been removed for the cellar and was junk. He said it could be screened and used as sand this winter. The remainder of the material could be stored to be used as fill. He added it was possible that the Road Agent may not have to purchase sand this winter if he could use this sand.

Keith asked the costs to load, move and screen the material and if this cost would be greater than the costs of purchasing sand.

Joni noted several people in the past have taken some of the material for free without the Board's permission.

Bob thought Gordon's idea was good as he has the use of a screen, etc.

Keith agreed with the concept if it was cost effective.

Keith noted the Board had investigated Whitehouse Acres and the common land issues. He asked if the Board was ready to address the situation with the homeowners. Keith thought Attorney Soltani would be ready.

Joanne will schedule Attorney Soltani and Whitehouse Acres on the agenda. Keith noted the Board agreed to send letters to each homeowner about the meeting.

Joanne noted there was a welfare issue this past week that has been resolved. She said Attorney Soltani suggested the Town re-establish its Welfare Appeals Board.

Joni said Val Long, Harvey Harkness, Sonia Noyes and Don Harty are members of this Board. She thought they should check with the office to see if their terms were still in effect. Joanne wanted to discuss this with Lee Bartlett to update the information.

10:25 PM - Joanne made a motion to adjourn. Keith seconded the motion. All in favor.