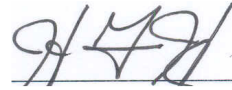


Approved as amended



TOWN OF EPSOM

BUDGET COMMITTEE

JANUARY 3, 2009

Present: Harvey Harkness, Chairman; Marylou Keane, Vice Chairman; Joyce Heck; Carol McGuire; Carole Brown; Larry Yeaton; Brad Keyes; David Fiorentino; Mike Wiggett; Kevin Reeves

Excused: Larry Caraway; Joanne Randall

Other Attendees: Andrew Walton; Val Long

Harvey opened the meeting at 9:03 A.M.

Harvey had completed research for Larry Yeaton's question regarding State requirements for 5 year assessing and passed out copies of the New Hampshire Constitution to each member.

The minutes of December 18th were reviewed and amended.

Larry Yeaton made a motion to accept the minutes as amended with Carole seconding the motion.

Harvey asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There being no discussion on the motion, Harvey called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Harvey noted the agenda would be to review and approve the Water District budget and then the Town budget. He had prepared a sheet with issues they had yet to resolve. Harvey noted they had today and January 8th to finish the budgets for presentation at the public hearing January 15th.

Kevin Reeves - Epsom Water District  
Budget

Kevin noted there was not a lot of change in the budget from last year. The company doing the billing and finance had held their price for another year. They have to complete repairs due to the flooding and are replacing some meters which are expensive. They try to replace all the meters every 10 years.

Kevin explained they plan to relocate the controls for the #2 pump on Water Street. With no repairs occurring for the river it is a constant problem. There is grant money available to assist with this work. Kevin explained the work they wanted to complete saying the

District will have to pay 25% of the cost with the grant. The money will come from the fund balance with no rate increase required.

Carole had attended the river study meetings, noting the aerials show many changes around Round Pond.

Carol asked if this was part of the Town budget. Kevin explained the District was separate and was paid only by the members of the village district only.

Joyce asked why the Professional Fees had increased with Kevin explaining they had to have the books audited.

Larry asked if Pennichuck Waters Works had ever approached them about purchasing the District, Kevin said no.

Discussion occurred regarding expanding the District; Kevin noted the current members are not interested in financing an expansion. Larry noted once there was discussion of having another district west of the Suncook River around the traffic circle. Kevin said for the District to expand there another tank would be required. Kevin noted discussions have been held with Kingstowne as they could put a pipe across the river from River Road. The District would only use one meter, having Kingstowne responsible for the lines and meters within the park. The Kingstowne owners were not interested in this option.

Mike made a motion to present the Epsom Water District budget as presented with Carole seconding the motion.

Harvey asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There being no discussion on the motion, Harvey called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Town Budget

Harvey and Marylou passed out information they had prepared.

Dave was concerned with giving all employees a raise. He noted in this economy he did not know how many people were making more money for 2009. He questioned if it was fiscally responsible to give raises this year. Kevin agreed with Larry noting he felt a 5.7% COLA was too high.

Dave noted with Faith's position not being filled stipends were given to the office employees. Carole noted the stipends given to the office staff; Nancy and Barbara had each received \$1,000.00, Debbie \$500.00 and Dawn \$750.00. Larry felt the Fire Department employees should have received the stipend. Carole thought they and the Police Department employees both received stipends.

Harvey noted they could increase the salaries for the Fire and Police departments and not other employees. However, he noted is it the Board of Selectmen's responsibility as to how the money is allocated and they could reallocate the money from the Budget Committee's recommendations.

Dave felt the Town had to keep up on the Patrolmen and full time Firefighters, but not the chiefs. Marylou noted Joanne said the Selectmen had recommended COLA's for all employees and merit increases for the Police and Fire Department employees. Harvey noted Joanne said this was a practice of the Selectmen.

Carole noted she was told by a private citizen the Fire and Police Department employees received a stipend also, but she had not verified this.

It was discussed there was no Selectmen's representative present at the meeting to respond to questions. Harvey indicated this was a public meeting and if the Selectmen's representative was unavailable then someone else should be appointed to attend the meeting.

Marylou questioned if the Police and Fire Departments received bonuses or a salary increase and if the money had been included in the 2009 salaries. The salaries in the 2008 budget and actual figures were reviewed. Joyce noted she was not in favor of a merit increase, she questioned if the Town had criteria for granting merit increases, and discussion ensued.

Harvey noted Larry Yeaton and he had pushed for articulately defined salary increases for the Fire and Police Departments. He explained the definitions of step increases. Larry indicated he has asked for years the number of years of experience the average Police Chiefs have, he has not received a response. Harvey said they have not received any salary schedules.

Harvey noted the following consensuses:

- The Committee was not in favor of the 5.7% COLA
- The Committee was not in favor of the recommended merit increases
- The Committee was leaning toward increases for the Police Department Patrolmen and Full Time Firefighters

Carole had information from Fire Chief Yeaton regarding the potential schedule for Fire Department employees. It was noted it was for 2009 only.

Harvey felt they could increase the Patrolmen and Full Time Firefighters salaries and convey to the Selectmen what the funds were for. He noted next year if the Board was asked what they did with the money and it wasn't used for that purpose then the Budget Committee members would not be happy.

Discussion ensued as to which COLA's and merit increases to remove from the budgets.

The following lines were reviewed with these amounts recommended:

Secretarial/Administrative	
01-4130.2-110 - Secretarial Administrative	\$68,072.00
(\$65,387.00 as in 2008 Budget plus \$2,685.00 for additional hours)	
Town Clerk	
01-4140.1-130 - Town Clerk	\$20,317.00
Administrative/Financial	
01-4150.1-110 - Financial Administrative	\$38,335.00
Financial Administrative Tax Collector	
01-4150.4-130 - Tax Collector	\$20,317.00
Zoning Compliance	
01-4191.2-150 - Zoning Compliance	\$40,143.00
Police Department Administration 01-	
4210.1-110 - Administrative/Chief 01-	\$55,000.00
4210.1-635 - Gasoline 01-4210.1-760 -	\$21,500.00
Vehicles	\$13,800.00
Full & Part Time	
01-4210.2-110 - Full/Time Positions	\$191,459.00
Police Department Secretary 01-4210.5-110	
- Administrative Assistant	\$31,147.00
Fire Department Administration 01-	
4220.1-110 - Full Time Positions 01-	\$176,696.00
4220.1-682 - Equipment Purchase	\$9,114.00
Emergency Management (Civil Defense) 01-4290.1-	
370 - Training	\$1,500.00
01-4290.1-390 - Emergency Management Director	\$1,870.00
01-4290.1-682 - Equipment Purchase	\$1,325.00
Road Agent Position 01-	
4311.1-110 - Road Agent	\$46,839.00
Full Time Position	
01-4311.2-110 - Full Time Position	\$27,477.00
Roads Maintenance	
01-4312.4-430 - Highway/Street Maintenance	\$250,000.00

Other Sanitation	
01-4329.4-100 - Mosquito Control	\$10.00
Planning & Zoning	
Planning	
01-4191.1-100 - Driveway Inspector 01-	\$1,500.00
4191.1-305 - Secretarial Support 01-4191.1-	\$1,300.00
310 - Architects & Engineering 01-4191.1-390	\$1,000.00
- Other Professional Services 01-4191.1-550 -	\$750.00
Printing & Publishing	\$3,098.00
Cemeteries	
01-4195.1-925 - Cemetery Maintenance	\$11,000.00
01-4195.1-950 - Road Maintenance	\$1,500.00
Health Administration 01-	
4411.1-130 - Health Officer	\$5,922.00
Pest Control	
01-4414.1-150 - Dog Officer	\$10.00
Welfare Administration 01-	
4441.1-130 - Welfare Officer	\$12,397.00
Welfare Vendor Policies 01.-	
4445.2-417 - Mortgages 01-	\$10,500.00
4445.2-813 - Rents	\$13,500.00
Parks & Recreation	
Parks	
01-4520.5-430 - Repairs - Parks Recreation	\$1,000.00
Swimming	
01-4520.8-100 - Swimming Lessons	\$2,525.00
Patriotic Services	
01-4583.1-390 - Flowers-Flag Markers 01-	\$945.00
4583.9-390 - Other Professional Services	\$75.00
Band	
01-4589.1-391 - Band	\$2,000.00

Discussion ensued regarding the revaluation of property. Larry commented the voters had voted to not accept the contract with Avitar to complete portions of the revaluation

each year. He asked why there was so much money in this line. Carole noted the Town had to be revaluated every 5 years per State regulations.

Harvey noted he had heard Avitar returned, revaluated and increased the assessments on some properties telling the owners' mistakes had been made. He questioned how the Board of Selectmen was holding the company accountable. Joyce asked how the citizens knew if they were doing a good job. Carol noted the State regulated assessors. Harvey is to check with Nancy if there is a contract with Avitar and the amount of the contract.

Carol noted the Chairman of the Planning Board (her husband) recommend not belonging to the Regional Planning Commission. The Planning Board budget was reduced to \$25,000.00 based upon the above figures.

Harvey noted the town owns 6 buildings that all require maintenance and upkeep. The Selectmen are responsible for the Town Hall, Meetinghouse and Old Library. There is \$1,900.00 in the budget to maintain the buildings with no one monitoring them. He noted the Town has no maintenance plan. The grant money for the Meetinghouse will be running out this year.

Carol questioned why have the buildings if the Town does not use them. Val Long said the Old Library is used as a Library and by the Historical Society with hours at the building. The Historical Society pays the utilities.

Harvey noted the lease on the Town Office space expires in 2010. He noted the Selectmen have a Committee reviewing options for Town Office space. He felt the Town should use the space under the Meetinghouse and also use space in the Town Hall if needed. He felt \$1,900.00 was not enough maintenance money.

Larry indicated he has been requesting information on the Special Detail Money. He asked the Town's revenue for the details as the Town is to receive money for use of the cruisers, etc. Carol noted the Town would also have to be paying retirement on the money paid to the officers.

The salaries for the Police Patrolmen were discussed. Kevin felt if they did not have enough money to pay an adequate salary then they should hire fewer officers and pay them more with the money allocated. Larry wanted to increase their salaries and also cut the vehicle this year. He thought they could put half the money in this year's budget and half in next years. He noted it was to be a 4 vehicle department and they currently have 4 cruisers and a Jeep.

Dave noted that Chief Preve had extra money remaining at the end of the year and had asked the Selectmen to spend it on bulletproof vests. He asked if there was money in the 2009 budget for the vests.

Discussions occurred regarding potential areas to reduce the Police Department budget. Larry wanted to verify if vehicle money could be encumbered to 2010. They returned the

money requested in the original budget for the patrolmen. Discussion also occurred as to a fair starting salary was for a patrolman. The qualifications and education were discussed. It was felt a salary scale was needed.

The Fire Department equipment line has not been spent the last few years. The command vehicle purchased with the Reid donation was discussed.

The Emergency Management requested budget was reviewed. It was felt the requests could not be based upon the tornado as the Town may never have another. Carole noted grants would not be written if there were no matching funds. The reductions were determined.

Dave felt the money should be restored to the Highway Department money due to the condition of the roads. He also noted Gordon was the only town employee who did not request a raise for his employee or himself. Dave felt the roads were the root of the Town's infrastructure.

Andrew Walton noted he had been to 97% of the Selectmen's meetings. He has asked them how they plan to explain giving stipends and bonuses to the town employees. Andrew had chaired the Highway facilities Committee. He noted the Town has a truck that if the payment is not approved this year it would have to be returned.

Kevin noted the Highway Department would be receiving \$80,000.00 of FEMA money. Larry and Carole felt returning the money to the Highway Budget could kill the budget.

Harvey has spoken to the Welfare Director who told him there has been an increase in requests for assistance. Joyce felt the Welfare budget could be cut and the actual expenses from last year doubled.

Money was returned for swimming lessons, patriotic services and the band. Reductions were made to the Planning Board budget.

The budget has been reduced by \$38,636.00.

Larry felt COLAs should not be included in the default budget. Discussion ensued if there could be a motion to approve the budget as proposed today. Larry and Brad thought they should not vote on the budget until the public hearing. Harvey requested the Committee have a consensus on the budget after the meeting of January 15th.

Kevin questioned what the duties of the Zoning Compliance Officer were. Harvey asked Betsy to explain them. Betsy noted he issued building permits, certificates of occupancies, checked for zoning violations and other items. She was not sure of all his duties. It was requested the Zoning Compliance Officer come before the Budget Committee to explain his duties.

There was a consensus the school budget was acceptable. Kevin noted it was built around the default budget from last year. He noted they have contracts with most of the employees that had to be honored.

The next meeting is January 8th at 7:00 P.M. at the Town Office.

Kevin made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Carol seconding the motion.

Harvey asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There being no discussion on the motion, Harvey called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Harvey adjourned the meeting at 12:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak  
Recording Secretary