

Approved as amended MJK 11/20/08

TOWN OF EPSOM

BUDGET COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 13, 2008

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

Absent: Larry Yeaton; Larry Caraway

Other Attendees: Nancy Wheeler; Gordon Ellis; Keith Cota; Wayne Preve; Stewart Yeaton; Val Long; Nancy Claris; Ed Nutter

Harvey opened the meeting at 7:00 P.M. stating the town budget would be presented tonight.

The minutes of September 18, 2008 were reviewed and amended. Harvey noted the revisions he had made. He noted the school district's budget presentation was moved to December 11th with November 20th being a work session for the town budget and Warrant Articles. Harvey noted the December 18th meeting may not be required.

Joanne made a motion to accept the minutes of September 18, 2008 as amended with Brad 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.

It was decided to have the Water District's budget presented on December 11th.

Harvey noted after Joanne presented the town budget the committee would begin its analysis. He indicated the three major department heads were present to respond to questions. If necessary the committee could request they also return next week.

Joanne presented the town budget noting the Selectmen only had four Warrant Articles. She noted the Selectmen came to the conclusion to put in the budget what it cost to operate the town, not use Warrant Articles for items they felt necessary.

Joanne noted there was a 5.7% COLA built into the salary lines. The Police and Fire Department salaries were higher based upon department requests. There are some items not finalized - the fees for the Community Action Program, the BCEP budget with the property liability insurance figure being an estimate. The policy begins in July.

Joanne noted the following increases:

Police Chief Salary increased - 15.4%

Full Time Officers - 8.94%

Administrative Assistant - 18.5%

Gas - \$10,000.00

Total Police Department Increases -
14.12%

Full Time Fire Personnel Salaries - 13.8%

Gas & Oil Increased

Total Fire Department Increases -7.08%

Emergency Management requested an increased budget with the Selectmen reducing it to a realistic budget. Previously there was little money in this budget.

This is the last year of the library bond payment.

The total town budget increases by 12.04%.

Joanne noted it was the feeling of the Board of Selectmen this was a most realistic and fair budget, they have cut where it was realistic. Some of the departments were trying to catch salaries up to realistic levels, putting in a fair salary with Selectmen support. Many of the increases are for fuel and utilities.

Joanne noted the reason for the Police Department vacancies is the salaries. Harvey asked her to describe the exit process. Joanne said the person is invited to a Board of Selectmen meeting. Neither officer that left had negative comments about the town or department. They could not afford to remain with both having been working a second job.

Harvey asked if both took higher paying positions. Joanne indicated yes, one in another department and the other in another field.

Joyce requested the actual figures for the 2007 and 2008 budgets.

Carole Brown asked if the Emergency Management Director had submitted a list of equipment he would like to purchase. Joanne noted there was one with it being important for town officials responding to have vests, ill badges, etc. Brad asked the impact of not having them. Joanne noted they would not have the resources. For grants the town needs to have matching funds. Harvey noted emergency management money is universal across the country. Joanne noted an important part is training; Rick's main goal is preparation and training.

Brad asked if the Police Department totals includes what is needed to fill the vacancies. Chief Preve noted he has six full time slots. He cut out the part-timers as he had to pay them \$16.00 an hour and is only paying full-timers \$14.40 an hour. He noted the

overall increase to employees is 10%. He noted there are different percentages due to the accumulation of sick leave by some employees of 288 hours. If they do not use sick leave during the year they receive a bonus of three additional paid days.

If the budget passes Chief Preve will be able to start new officers at \$34,000.00. He explained the hiring process. It was discussed to train a new officer cost between \$30,000.00 to \$35,000.00. Chief Preve also discussed the additional training he sends officers to.

The gas and oil budgets were reviewed. Joanne noted the town has a heating oil contract for all its buildings. Keith Cota noted the town only pays for gas, not the taxes on gas.

Police Department staffing was discussed. Keith has met with the Chief and the chiefs of Pembroke and Allenstown. Keith was amazed at the comradery between personnel.

Brad asked why the welfare budget was down. Joanne noted the budget was based upon a budget from five years ago due to default budgets. The proposed budget is what the Welfare Director feels she will actually use. Joyce asked the number of hours the Welfare Director worked with Joanne not knowing, she thought 20 hours.

Marylou requested a list of equipment wanted by the Police and Fire Departments. From the Highway Department she would like a list of proposed road projects. Carole would like an itemized list from the Emergency Management Director.

Brad asked why the Workers Comp figure was reduced. Joanne explained the town renegotiated the contract, reducing it by 20%. Joanne noted the town belongs to the Suncook Valley Regional Association. Through discussions with other towns they have created a smaller insurance group with a savings in health insurance of 20%.

Brad asked about the jump in the Police Department dispatch fees. Chief Preve explained the town uses the Bow Dispatch Center which increased its fees. Three of the towns are trying to get in with the Merrimack County Sheriff's Department Dispatch, but they can't take the towns at this time.

Keith noted he is on the Dispatch Committee trying to work with the County. He noted the towns are subsidizing the county dispatch services and have brought that up.

Chief Yeaton explained the Fire Department's dispatch services.

Joanne explained at a recent training she attended it was recommended by both the LGC and DRA towns not put on the ballot the increase per thousand for Warrant Articles. She said this information will not be on the ballots this year. Brad asked who made the decision; Joanne indicated the Board of Selectmen agreed to follow the advice of the LGC & DRA. bb

Dave pointed out the ballot should be the questions, not a place for information. Harvey said it does not prevent them from having the information available. Joanne said the

information would be available in the office, on the Website and at the deliberative session. Dave suggested posting it where the Warrant Articles are posted also.

Keith noted putting the vote of the Selectmen and Budget Committee on the ballot was a change in the law and the town adopted that policy. Joanne reaffirmed they had to put on the tally of the Selectmen and Budget Committee for special Warrant Articles.

Harvey noted the budget presented at the deliberative session is the Budget Committee's budget. He noted a vote will be taken and listed. After the deliberative session the Budget Committee meets and votes on revisions. If the Budget Committee does not recommend the budget each member has to sign a notarized statement indicating they are not recommending the budget.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 20th. Harvey recommended they ask the three department heads to be here for discussion purposes. Also it was requested the Emergency Management Director attend. After they will decide if the need the December 4th meeting.

Harvey asked when the lease on the town office space is up, Joanne said the summer of 2010.

Val Long had a detailed budget from the Library which she passed out to Budget Committee members.

Joanne made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Kevin 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 9:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary