

Approved as amended Marylou Keane

TOWN OF EPSOM
BUDGET COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 20, 2008

Present: Mary Lou Keane, Vice Chairman; Joanne Randall; Carol McGuire; Carole Brown; Larry Yeaton; Brad Keyes; David Fiorentino; Mike Wiggett; Kevin Reeves

Excused: Harvey Harkness; Larry Caraway; Joyce Heck

Other Attendees: Nancy Wheeler; Keith Cota; Wayne Preve; Rick Bilodeau; Mary Frambach; Joni Kitson; Cheryl Arvanitis; Gordon Ellis; Nancy Claris; Bobbie Mongeon

Mary Lou opened the meeting at 7:02 P.M.

The minutes of November 13, 2008 were reviewed and amended.

Carol made a motion to accept the minutes of November 13, 2008 as amended with Joanne seconding the motion.

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

Based upon last week's discussion about not including the impact of Special Warrant Articles on the tax rate on the ballot, Joanne Randall had requested a formal statement from the LGC. She gave each member a copy of the response.

Larry Yeaton noted several years ago the town had gotten a legal opinion they could put the information on the ballot.

Rick Bilodeau - Emergency Management Director

Joanne noted she had passed on last week's questions to Rick and he should have the responses.

The equipment Rick would like to purchase was discussed. Rick noted he would like to obtain a lap top computer, portable printer, digital camera and incident command vests to identify people at an incident.

Rick would like to have mileage reimbursement money in the budget. Currently there is no way to reimburse him for mileage in the budget. FEMA would reimburse the town for his mileage during an incident.

Carole Brown asked if Rick was working for more than one town. Rick noted he worked for several towns, but was only the Emergency Management Director for Epsom.

Rick noted the training is mandated. If the town does not provide certain training it is not eligible for certain reimbursements (grants). He described the classes town officials are required to take. Mary Lou asked how they were paid for previously with Rick indicating the costs were picked up by the Fire Department. This year the instructor donated his services. Rick's job is to be sure the new people are trained. Some grants would assist in paying for classes.

Rick also could put in for a matching grant for a portable generator. Kevin confirmed the money could only be spent if the grants were awarded to the town.

Rick noted all the lines were increased as there was no prior money in the lines.

Gordon Ellis - Road Agent

Larry asked how many of the 2008 projects were actually completed. Gordon noted the entire list should be completed by the end of the year.

Carol McGuire asked where the \$503,282.00 for projects was in next year's budget. Gordon noted the grant amounts were not shown which would assist to pay for some of the projects. Carol asked the amount of the first four projects in the budget. Gordon noted 25% was in the budget with 75% to come from grant money. Gordon said some of the money would be from the Capital Reserve Account. His budget is subject to change based upon the weather.

Gordon noted he had not done any crack sealing this year, saving the money for winter maintenance.

Carol McGuire asked if the engineering services were for road reconstruction projects. Gordon indicated it was if DES permits were required that were beyond his capacity. Kevin asked which firm was used with Gordon saying who ever the Planning Board uses.

Mary Lou noted there was \$5,000.00 for equipment purchases that has not been spent this year. Gordon is waiting until the end of December; purchases will be based upon the weather. Joanne noted they would see this for several departments and many of them have to use the funds for other lines.

Mary Lou asked in light of the economy if money had to be cut where Gordon would cut it. Joanne noted typically one of the projects would be cut. Gordon asked what line she would want to cut. If the Highway Reconstruction line was cut they would lose grant money. Gordon said to save money they could return to

the policy of plowing the roads after a storm is over. It was discussed there is more traffic today and this might not be an option.

Wayne Preve - Police Department

Joanne noted one of the main questions last week was wages. She asked Chief Preve to explain the extra days some employees are paid for. Nancy Wheeler explained when the Employee Handbook was revised it was added when an employee had earned 288 hours of sick leave and they go one year without using any sick leave they receive 3 additional days of pay. There are three employees in the Police Department eligible for this benefit and the money is included in the budget.

Joanne asked Chief Preve if he has received more information regarding the dispatch costs. Chief Preve noted things are in the works. He spoke with the Bow Town Manager and they are still reviewing the figures. Larry asked how the costs are based, Chief Preve noted by the average number of calls. Based upon the last three years, Bow is saying Epsom used 14% of the costs.

Mary Lou asked if Chief Preve had generated an equipment list. Chief Preve noted he is asking for \$1,000.00 to replace some of the vests, this would be a 50/50 grant. The ones the department has will be 5 years old.

Kevin asked how often the department gets a vehicle. Chief Preve said they replace one each year. Larry asked the mileage of each vehicle. Chief Preve said the 2008 has between 8,000 to 9,000 miles; the 2007 has approximately 40,000 miles; the Explorer has 55,000 to 60,000 miles and the 2006 cruiser has 75,000 to 80,000.

Chief Preve said they could go without purchasing a cruiser this year, but if they have a default budget then the following year they would have to replace two vehicles.

Kevin asked the number of full time positions. Chief Preve said 6 including him. Kevin asked the figures he would be bringing the salaries up to. Chief Preve said if the 2009 budget passes the salaries would be:

- \$61,162.00 for the Chief
- \$47,542.00 for the Sargent
- \$37,712.00 for the two current Patrolmen
- \$34,000.00 for a new Officer

Dave asked if Chief Preve would cut the Special Operations Unit if he had to cut something from his budget. Chief Preve noted it was nice to belong to the unit, but if something had to go he would consider it. Dave asked if the department could have handled the two incidents last year without the unit. Chief Preve noted they could call the State Police or handle situations within the department.

Chief Preve noted they are understanding; the town could get out of the unit and return to it another year.

Joanne noted if the town had a situation they could call on the unit, but they would have to pay for the services. Chief Preve verified this, saying the department would not have some of the training or equipment. It is nice to have, but he could call on the State Police. Mary Lou asked if the State Police charged, Chief Preve said no.

Kevin asked if the town ended up with a default budget would Chief Preve consider working with less officers and paying the current ones more money. Chief Preve noted they could drop one position, discussing the issues with doing so.

Mary Lou asked if the dispatch fees come in over \$50,000.00 where could Chief Preve cut his budget. Larry said that cost would be part of the default budget. Chief Preve said he would take out the Special Operations Unit and tighten up other lines. Chief Preve discussed he will move to Merrimack County Sheriffs Department dispatch Services as soon as they are able to take Epsom.

The town's health insurance costs were discussed.

Library Budget

Larry asked what they expected to have for legal fees and they never have had that line in the past. Cheryl Arvanitis noted they are erring on the side of caution. The use of an attorney is for the agreement for the old library building. Mary Lou asked why they did not use Town Counsel. Cheryl said the Trustees went on his advice and then he changed his opinion. They had to get further legal assistance.

Carol McGuire asked about the programs offered. The programs were explained with Nancy Claris saying most of the cost is for children's programs, the summer reading program and fees for performers. Larry noted the library is being used more.

Kevin asked if the town has a contract for fuel oil for all its buildings. Keith Cota said yes. Bobbie Mongeon noted the Library uses propane.

Dave asked where the fat was in their budget. Cheryl noted the book purchase lines increased, but with the increased patronage use they are necessary. She stated they try to keep the budget as lean as possible. Cheryl noted the more the economy goes bad, their patronage goes up.

Carol McGuire asked why the salaries are the same in the regular and default budgets. Cheryl said they are contracted.

Larry thought the Library was doing a good job.

Nancy Wheeler asked if they had questions about other parts of the budget or the other handouts.

Brad asked if they had information regarding the number of households and population. Nancy noted they did not have a lot of that. Betsy Bosiak noted the population could be taken from the Regional Planning Costs in the Planning Board budget as it is based on the population.

Mary Lou noted the next meeting is a work session, requesting everyone look at the budget. She noted they do not have the figures for Police Dispatch or the BCEP. She said the Committee has to determine if they are comfortable with the bottom line increase. She noted people have their tax bills with the County and School portions having increased.

Carol McGuire has looked at the overall budget. She is surprised at the figures, saying she does not feel people de Bet know the cost of things.

It was discussed the COLA is computed in the default budget.

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

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

Mary Lou adjourned the meeting at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary