

Approved as amended _____

TOWN OF EPSOM

BUDGET COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 3, 2009

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

Excused: Tammy Vaillancourt

Other Attendees: Cheryl Arvanitis; Wayne Preve; Keith Cota; Nancy Wheeler; Val Long; Nancy Claris; Dawn Blackwell; Alison Parodi; Jay Hickey

Harvey opened the meeting at 7:00 P.M.

Carole made a motion to accept the minutes of November 19th with Carol seconding the motion.

The minutes of November 19th were reviewed and amended.

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

Library:

Val Long passed out a handout with the expenses to date as requested by the Committee at the previous meeting.

Harvey asked if any lines would be overspent. Val noted books, video, building maintenance (a big item), cleaning, programs and the professional lines.

Harvey asked if there were lines that are projected to not be fully spent; Nancy Claris noted the reference material (remaining monies to be moved to cover the books line). The electricity, fuel, telephone and fixtures lines will have money remaining. Some money will remain on the salary line. Nancy noted other lines will be tight.

Harvey asked the total remaining funds; Val indicated this has not been calculated. Joanne asked what happens to funds not spent; Nancy Claris noted they were returned to the town.

Harvey noted the difference between the 2009 and 2010 library budgets was \$9,969.00.

Carol requested a breakdown of the professional line which Val provided. The big item was \$743.75 for bookkeeping services. It was discussed the trustees do not have an accounting background and felt they needed assistance.

Harvey noted the overall increase was 6.74% with the majority of the increase being for health insurance.

Town Office:

Nancy Wheeler reviewed the town budget and lines with increases. The Morrison Fund Interest line was originally \$2,500.00 to purchase two computers for the Town Office. Two computers were added to this for the Town Clerk/Tax Collectors Office. This reduced the overall budget needs from tax monies. It was discussed the Board of Selectmen did not want to have a Warrant Article. If the budget does not pass the money could be found in other lines for the computers. Harvey noted the Morrison Fund line should not be included in the budget as it is not a tax impact.

Nancy noted the training office staff would like to attend in 2010 also indicating mileage for the staff was taken from the Selectmen's line and put with each individual category (Secretarial/Administrative and Administrative/Financial).

The salary line for Secretarial/Administrative was reviewed with Nancy noting the increase was 3% for one individual and 3.3% for the other individual.

Nancy noted an increase was included for printing the town report as it may be slightly larger next year.

Nancy noted the increase in property insurance and that the workers comp costs for 2009 were reduced as the Selectmen had moved it to the LGC.

The Administrative/Financial salary was increased by 3.1% with other increases for health insurance, computer support and software.

Audit costs will be reduced for 2010 as the Town will not have to complete the additional single audit required for Federal funds received over \$500,000.00.

Carol questioned only one-half of the legal line has been spent. Nancy noted the Town Attorney has not been contacted as much this year. Joanne noted some cases are covered by the LGC saving the Town money. The Town Attorney bills the Town once a month for services received during the month.

Nancy noted the total amount for the 27th pay check of 2009 will be \$28,000.00 to \$31,000.00.

Joyce heck questioned the Revaluation of Property having spent \$9,000.00 less for 2009 than budgeted; Nancy noted the final amount will be \$33,500.00. Harvey asked the

length of the contract with Avitar, Joanne noted it was just done. She noted the Town has a bid policy with anything costing over \$5,000.00 going out to bid with certain exceptions and some emergencies. Nancy noted the contract was completed 3 years ago with Barbara having solicited bids at that time.

Under General governmental Buildings Nancy noted the custodial services for the Town Office have not risen in two years, with the company expected to request an increase this year. There is also an increase included for additional cleaning. The heating and oil costs have been decreased; this line includes the Town Office, Town Hall and Meetinghouse. Harvey asked if a decrease had been noticed at the Town Hall since it was insulated, Nancy noted no the gallon usage was the same.

Nancy noted the Repair and Maintenance line was increased as the floors in the Town Office need to be resealed. Keith Cota noted \$5,000.00 of the increase was for a match for an additional LCHIP grant for work at the Meetinghouse. The \$5,000.00 match was a necessary budget item, as it will provide Epsom with \$20,000.00 if Epsom is awarded a LCHIP grant it has applied for.

Harvey asked Joanne if the two public buildings not in use were reviewed and who was responsible for any repairs to the Meetinghouse and Town Hall. Nancy noted there was not anything in the budget for the Meetinghouse as it is still considered to be in renovation stages. Harvey asked who monitored the Meetinghouse, Joanne indicated the Stewardship Committee. Harvey asked about the Town Hall with Joanne noting the same committee.

Harvey asked if the shades were to be replaced at the Town Hall, Joanne indicated no. Discussion continued regarding what is monitored and if a citizen wanted to monitor the buildings how they would do it. Joanne suggested the Chairman of the Selectmen be contacted and asked when he monitors the buildings. Harvey thought when it was discussed there was going to be a check list for monitoring the buildings that would be completed each time.

Harvey asked if there were funds in the budget for managing the Website. Nancy noted there were some. Harvey asked who enters the information, Nancy indicted Debbie.

Joanne informed the Committee she had contacted Cec Curran, Health officer, who was unaware he was to be present tonight. She suggested to Cec that he contact Harvey and ask to be put on next week's agenda.

Conservation Commission:

Alison Parodi, Chairman of the Commission, noted three Conservation Easements will be finalized by the end of the year. This will protect 250 acres with the Conservation Commission providing support costs of approximately \$45,000.00.

Alison noted there would be a need to build back the Conservation funds. Alison noted in Epsom the fund receives 10% of the current use taxes paid with most towns receiving 50% or more. David confirmed properties with easements could not be developed. Alison confirmed this but noted the owners could use the properties for some things. Bear Paw monitors these easements but if they defaulted the Town would do the monitoring.

The amount in the Conservation fund was discussed (\$50,000.00) before spending the above amount. There are no other regular sources of income to the funds. It was noted last year the fund received approximately \$8,000.00 to \$9,000.00, this year it will be approximately \$2,000.00. Alison noted she completes the work with volunteers.

Carole asked if education occurred regarding the bugs coming in and damaging trees. Alison noted Elsie Fife is the school liaison, targeting the 4th and 5th graders. Carole felt an article regarding the bugs in the Conservation News would be good to send to the school.

Brad noted there was \$35,000.00 in the Conservation Capital Reserve fund, Nancy noted this could only be accessed by town vote.

Alison reviewed the town roadside clean-up program; it is challenging to find people to participate. The Conservation Commission also participated in the writing of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, are collecting dam information and requesting the owners monitor the dams.

Swimming:

Alison noted swimming lessons were held this year after a two year lapse. She would like a location in Epsom. Attendance had dropped this year as Better Buddies did not attend Epsom's lessons. The instructors are paid for this program.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector:

Dawn Blackwell noted the revenue for motor vehicle registrations is down approximately \$16,000.00 from last year. In January residents will be able to license their dogs on-line. The office will also be able to notify people on-line the tax is due if requested.

Dawn noted the request for the computers was taken out of this area of the budget. She noted the Printing and Publishing line was increased as there is an extra election in 2010.

Approximately 10.9% of the 2009 property taxes are not paid, with the tax lien expenses having increased. Harvey asked if the town has assumed property due to non-payment of taxes, Dawn noted no more than usual.

Harvey praised Dawn as she has a statewide reputation as a Town Clerk/Tax Collector and has received several awards.

Zoning Compliance Office:

Jay passed around a copy of a monthly report and the growth management report he completes, noting records are important. Jay has taken on a part-time assistant this year. Jay discussed the work being completed by the assistant. Jay has talked to Avitar about software for building permits.

Jay noted this is the second year the revenues have not covered his expenses. Jay is working 3 extra hours until the end of the year due to work to be completed. Jay is the town's Flood Plain Administrator with more units in the flood plain with the new flood maps.

Other miscellaneous items Jay noted included was one-half of the payment for software, not all the mileage costs or revenue is in.

Harvey asked the committee if anyone had any particular aspects of the budget to comment on or concerns to address.

Dave noted the interest revenue would be down this year, Nancy commented the November interest is not included in the revenue sheet given to the Committee.

Carole has concerns with the Emergency Management budget. She was concerned it was a little budget item but looked like it was mushrooming in size. She wondered if the Selectmen had given thought to change to put this under another department. Joanne noted that the Emergency Management Director is given direction from the board of Selectmen and if anyone had concerns about the Department's direction, they should address them to the Board of Selectmen.

Joanne noted the Selectmen recognize the need to have an Emergency Management Director and resources to do the job. He was asked to provide the Board with what was needed. Carole questioned if the Town could pay someone in another department to do the position. Joanne asked Carole which specific budget items she was concerned with. Carole said that there were no specific lines, but was concerned that the Emergency management Department was getting bigger and has the potential to get out of control. She mentioned that the Police Department vehicle that will be moved out of rotation had been requested to become a vehicle for Emergency Management. Joanne stated that the placement, sale or use of that and any vehicle was up to the discretion of the Board of Selectmen and no decision had yet been made.

Harvey asked Carole if she could look at what towns of similar size had. Virginia felt Tammy could obtain information and with her (Virginia's) training she felt the Town was behind.

Chief Preve noted the Police and Fire Departments have different items they have received through grants or donations. Rick is trying to add emergency supplies to the trailer owned by the Town.

Discussion occurred that maybe there should be more regionalization for items. Chief Preve explained what the State has available, noting all departments have tried to purchase supplies for the trailer.

Joanne suggested to Carole that as the Emergency Management Department liaison to the Budget Committee, she should have called the Director to find out information that could have answered her budget questions in advance. She also suggested Carole spend time with Rick and maybe obtain a better idea of what he is attempting to accomplish.

Harvey understands the point of Emergency Management is a safety component, but it looks like there is also a broader umbrella. The Emergency Management Director coordinates between all the departments, being ready for an event if it occurs. Harvey cautioned incorporating into another department as the State requirements are looking more toward developing a department.

Harvey noted the town has \$520,426.00 to close out 2009; it should be enough to cover expenses or have some funds available at the end of the year. Nancy could not respond noting they hope to have funds to put into the undesignated fund balance. There is approximately \$900,000.00 in the fund with not all this amount being cash. To access the Town would have to go to DRA and the courts for a special town meeting to expend from the fund. The Town would have to be broke to request this.

The next meeting is set for December 10th at 7:00 P.M. and will be a work session for the budget.

Carol made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Dave 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 9:18 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary