

TOWN OF EPSOM

BUDGET COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 19, 2009

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

Excused: Brad Keyes

Other Attendees: Wayne Preve; Keith Cota; Stewart Yeaton; Nancy Wheeler; Cheryl Arvanitis; Val Long; Bobbie Mongeon; Nancy Claris; Rick Bilodeau; Gordon Ellis

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

The minutes of November 12<sup>th</sup> were reviewed and amended.

**Joanne made a motion to accept the minutes as amended 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.**

**Library:**

Harvey welcomed the Library Trustees, inviting them to discuss their proposed budget with the Committee.

Val Long, Treasurer of the Trustees, reviewed a fact sheet and the increased circulation numbers. Approximately 8,400 people have participated in programs or meetings at the Library. The Library has both adult and teen volunteers.

The Books line has been increased from \$12,500.00 to \$15,000.00. It has not been increased for 6 years. The Video Materials line was increased from \$1,500.00 to \$2,400.00. With no video rental stores in Epsom the use of this material has increased. Lines reduced include Technology and Website.

Cleaning of the building was discussed. This line was increased from \$2,000.00 to \$3,400.00 and is completed by a library employee as an independent contractor, 5 hours a week is budgeted. The number of hours was increased, not the salary for this item. The Fuel line was decreased with the Library having an 11 month contract with Eastern Propane. Fixtures include new items and durable goods, i.e. water filters. Nancy Claris

noted \$9,066.00 was spent on Building Maintenance in 2009 due to a water leak in walls and a new pump required for the septic system.

The Health insurance has increased as the Library Director will be taking the Health insurance in 2010. Salaries were increased 5% for all staff. The Trustees are working on a five-year plan for salaries at the Library as they are lower than the State median, the Trustees would like to bring people up to the median. They look at the salaries, education of the employees, size of the library, etc. in comparing the salaries. The number of employees and their salaries and hours worked were reviewed. Harvey noted in this category of the \$63,340.00 increase \$4,796.00 was the health insurance increase for the Library Director.

The cost of programs has increased due to a circulation increase. Professional costs include conferences, bookkeeping costs, dues and professional journals.

It was noted the 2009 figure was the budgeted amount, not the actual expended to date. The Committee has requested these figures. Cheryl Arvanitis noted the Library has expended \$108,110.00 with \$39,888.00 remaining for 2009.

Dave Fiorentino asked if Books, Videos and Programs remained the same would the circulation continue to increase. Nancy Claris noted the Programs presented have increased the usage of the Library. Val noted people would like additional videos. Harvey noted the Library has become Epsom's adult education center. Kevin asked if a fee was charged for use of the Library. It was discussed that State law prohibits charging fees for the use of the building.

The Trustees will provide by December 3<sup>rd</sup> the expenditures to date and a breakdown of the Professional line.

**Highway Department:**

Gordon Ellis noted the Road Maintenance line included all the road maintenance work he proposed to complete in 2010 outside of snow plowing. He is submitting one Warrant Article to add \$150,000.00 to the Capital Reserve Fund for the improvement and reconstruction of town roads. No Capital Reserve monies were spent in 2009 with several projects scheduled for 2010.

Gordon noted the box culvert slated to be replaced on Drolet Road will be the last of the box culverts to be replaced. This work will be completed in either 2009 or 2010 depending upon when the box is constructed. The road will be repaved next summer.

Paving and drainage work will be completed on New Orchard Road next year with some of the money from Federal funds and the remaining from the budget and Capital Reserve Funds.

Gordon will use Federal funds and Capital Reserve Funds to do work on Center Hill Road in 2010, he does not have a final figure for the work to be completed. He has applied for the Federal funds here as well as Chestnut Pond Road and Sanborn Hill Road.

Harvey asked if the Highway Department was near the point they were okay with the culverts with the replacements completed. Gordon noted with the worst culverts, 25% of the culverts in Epsom have been replaced.

Kevin confirmed the projects taking no money from the budget would be paid by 75% Federal funds and 25% from Capital Reserve Funds. Gordon agreed noting if there was money remaining in the budget at the end of the year he would use that money and not the Capital Reserve Funds.

Carole asked if New Orchard Road would be paved to the Pittsfield line when the final work was completed, Gordon indicated no.

Gordon noted the projects in the 2008 – 2013 Capital Improvement Program that had been completed. He noted the program was fluid depending upon the funds available. Harvey asked the amount in the Capital Reserve Funds with Marylou noting there was \$468,000.00.

Gordon is requesting \$381,890.00, the same amount as last year for Highway and Street Maintenance. Harvey hopes the vote is there to approve the Warrant Article for \$150,000.00. Nancy noted the money is not put into the Capital Reserve Funds until December of the year it is voted upon. Gordon noted the money voted for 2010 would not be available until 2011.

Mike asked if Gordon was still behind in road maintenance, Gordon said yes, but noted that this is the first year since he has been Road Agent that he was able to make a positive effect on the roads and not have to be reacting to natural disasters and emergencies.

Harvey asked about equipment the town owns, asking if they were working towards the purchase of a backhoe in 2011, Gordon affirmed this. Harvey asked the amount in the Equipment Capital Reserve Funds, Marylou indicated there was \$35,000.00. Harvey asked why Gordon did not do a Warrant Article to obtain the backhoe sooner. Gordon noted he was looking at the economy. Marylou noted if a backhoe was purchased the Capital Reserve Funds would be used with the remaining amount coming from a Warrant Article.

Harvey noted at the last Budget Committee meeting Joanne had shared the items the Highway Department had received from Audley Construction. Gordon noted they were out right gifts with the Town only having to pay to transport the items. Harvey asked the value with Gordon indicating there were 8 foot culvert sections at a value of \$250.00 or more each. Gordon gave credit to Larry Yeaton for pursuing and obtaining these items for the Town.

At Harvey's request Gordon noted the Highway Department has the following vehicles:

1996 F250 – 197,000 miles

2007 550 – 54,000 miles

2006 backhoe – rental item

Gordon noted he also has a 1947 sweeper and a York rake. Mainly he borrows another York rake to complete work on the roads.

Harvey asked Joanne if the Board had made a decision to purchase or lease equipment.

Joanne noted only the backhoe was rented. She noted there is no point in purchasing expensive highway equipment until the Highway Department has a facility to store it. Gordon noted it was cheaper to hire subs to complete much of the work. He hopes the Town will construct a facility in 8 to 9 years.

### **Fire Department:**

Chief Yeaton noted the billing for the ambulance has been adjusted for Medicare, Medicaid patients and town residents if needed. Concord Fire Department is used for intercepts as our only Para-med cannot do them all. Carole asked if other towns reimburse Epsom if our Para-med is used, Chief Yeaton said yes.

Wages for the full-time members of the Fire Department were discussed with the following information being given:

Para-med - \$19.84/hour

EMT-I - \$17.40/hour (7 years experience)

EMT-I - \$16.33/hour (4 years experience)

FF/EMT - \$14.37/hour

Chief Yeaton is not requesting a pay increase this year for the employees. They are scheduled to work 48/hours a week, but normally work 50 to 51 hours. They do not receive overtime until after working 53/hours a week. The 2009 budget reflects a 50 hour work week. The 2010 request includes an increase to 51 hours, but not a wage increase.

Chief Yeaton will complete a breakdown of call volume for the Town Report. He noted they are receiving an increase of calls from the Medical Center. Carole asked if calls were due to Epsom's location, not the town's size, Chief Yeaton concurred.

Chief Yeaton noted the Fire Department has the following vehicles:

2007 Ambulance – 42,000 miles

2001 Ambulance – 91,800 miles

Engine 1 (1987) – 16,700 miles

Engine 2 (1993) – 26,600 miles

Tanker (1993) – 27,000 miles

Command Vehicle – (2008 Tahoe)

### **Emergency Management:**

Harvey requested Rick Bilodeau, Emergency Management Director, explain his job. Rick noted it was to protect the people in Town and establish guidelines for emergencies, i.e. floods, ice storms, truck rollovers, material spills, work with FEMA and obtain grants.

Tammy asked if the Town has an updated emergency plan. Rick noted it was completed 3 or 4 years ago with portions having been updated. Joanne noted this year a hazard mitigation plan was updated, which included many of the same items that are addressed in the Emergency Plan.

Harvey asked if Rick was also responsible for educating the public, Rick noted he was. Harvey asked if there was training for the public, Rick indicated there were not, only the people needed for an emergency response. Joanne noted the Town has established a Public Information Officer who reports directly to the Incident Command (usually the Fire Chief) and then forwards information to the media during an emergency.

Virginia asked if the Town has a continuity of government plan, Rick indicated it does not.

Harvey requested a list of workshops the Emergency Management Director and other Town Officials have attended to show the time commitment being made.

Carole asked if the emergency trailer at the Police Station belonged to his department. Rick noted it was purchased with a grant to house the ATV and portable generator through the Police Department. They hope to stock it with other equipment also.

Rick discussed the telephone bank set up at the Emergency Operations Center at the Fire Station for use during an emergency. Town Office and Police Department telephone lines would be switched to the Emergency Operations Center in the case of an incident.

Harvey asked the amount of time Rick commitments to the position, Rick has not kept track of this item. Harvey felt it would be helpful in discussing the stipend increase. Joanne felt Rick put in an average of 15 to 20 hours a week with the classes and meetings he has attended.

Rick noted some books and maps needed to be updated with an increase in that line. He needs to acquire a computer, camera, traffic cones and barricades. Harvey asked the number with Rick feeling about 30 traffic cones. Harvey indicated the Committee needed specifics.

Rick would like to apply for grants but they require 50/50 matches. He is working with the school to have a hookup for a portable generator since it is the Town's shelter. He is researching grants for the portable generator. Harvey asked what grants were received for 2009, Rick noted none yet, but he is negotiating with FEMA.

Tammy noted there are programs that have grants for computers, cameras and certain other items. Harvey requested Rick follow-up with Tammy for information about the grants.

Carole asked if Rick had a vehicle able to pull the trailer. Rick noted the Police and Fire Department have vehicles with the Police currently controlling the trailer.

**Police Department:**

Chief Preve reviewed the information he gave to the Budget Committee (see attached).

Chief Preve would like to replace the roof on the Station next year. Funds would have to be encumbered from 2009.

Chief Preve noted he starts a non-certified officer at \$15.21/hour and a certified officer at \$16.87/hour. Epsom has a high call volume with the officers being busy. Chief Preve would like them to have one contact/activity every ½ hour.

Chief Preve noted many towns had default budgets last year so he will be looking at the pay scale. Carole asked if there were differences in the education requirements from town to town for officers. Chief Preve noted there were with smaller towns only requiring a high school education and larger towns/cities requiring a 2 years degree or 2 years experience. Epsom requests a 3 year commitment of officers it has to send through the Police Academy. Issues with lower pay were discussed with Chief Preve wanting to be in the median.

Dave asked if the Police Department was changing the vehicles too soon and Dave questioned if they had too many vehicles. Chief Preve noted they have been down officers for two years. Chief Preve noted he did not create the rotation, the Board of Selectmen determined it 6 or 7 years ago. By completing the rotation the Department is saving on repairs. This year the Department spent \$2,800.00 for repairing 4 vehicles. There is a concern for the liability of the officers. Mike agreed with Chief Preve noting cruisers are doing things regular vehicles are not required to do and have more wear and tear than a normal vehicle. Further discussion ensued regarding the rotation with Chief Preve indicating officers are in the vehicles 8 to 9 hours a day. It was discussed that a police vehicle is the officer's equipment and must be reliable and dependable at all times and at a moments notice.

Harvey felt the Committee has had excellent presentations and feels they have information for discussions. There has been a change in the schedule as the School cannot come in until December 17<sup>th</sup>.

The next meeting is set for December 3rd at 7:00 P.M. at the Town Office.

**Carol made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Joanne 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 9:55 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak  
Recording Secretary