

TOWN OF EPSOM  
BUDGET COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 9, 2021

**Present:** Marylou LaFleur-Keane, Chairman; Virginia Drew, Selectmen's Representative; Meadow Wysocki; Joy Sheehan; Mary Frambach; Joyce Heck; Len Gilman; Michael Muise, School Board Representative; Linda Hodgdon

**Not in Attendance:** Joni Kitson, Vice Chairman; Gary Kitson, Water District Representative; Penny Graham

**Other Attendees:** Deb Sullivan

Marylou opened the meeting at 7:08 PM.

Mr. Muise discussed that he did not have a school budget as there were corrections being made due to State funds they were potentially not receiving.

**Minutes**

The minutes of September 16, 2021 were reviewed and amended.

**Meadow motioned to approve the minutes of September 16, 2021 as amended, Joy seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Marylou asked if the Meeting Room at the Town Office would be available for future meetings. Virginia discussed the damage and what is occurring due to the accident last week. She noted she should know tomorrow when it might be available.

Marylou noted the Trustees of the Trust funds had prepared a report that she passed out to the members.

**Town Budget**

Virginia noted items that have increased. She noted that they have stopped ordering the printed RSA's so there is a decrease in that line.

Linda asked about the Professional Services increase, Virginia noted it was for the biannual audit.

Linda asked what Forestry Services was for Virginia was not sure of what the funds were for. Debbie will check as the last time funds were spent was 2017.

Linda asked about the Rental and Leases. Virginia noted that it was for the rental costs of the Town Office space. She discussed they will have a Warrant Article for renovations/additions to the Town Hall to convert it into office space. Virginia noted that the Town Office has to move by January 1, 2022.

Virginia noted the Selectmen have included a 5% salary increase for Town Employees. She noted the office staff takes advantage of as many free virtual webinars as possible.

### **Trustee of Trust Funds**

Virginia noted they did not get a salary increase.

### **Town Clerk**

There is a 5% salary increase increase for the Town Clerk. The Deputy Town Clerk received a 1% increase due to being a new employee.

### **Elections**

There was discussion on the rental of tents for elections. Due to the use of additional people at elections the meals costs have been increased.

### **Financial Administration**

Virginia noted that Debbie has changed the accounting system being used by the Town. She has also suggested her hours be reduced as she can complete the work in less time with the new system. Len indicated she should be commended for suggesting the reduction of hours.

Legal expenses have been reduced as it is not being used as much.

### **Tax Collector**

Expenses have been reduced.

### **Personnel Administration**

Virginia noted that health and dental insurance are difficult to determine. She discussed the additional increases. Mary asked the amount of the health insurance buyout. It is \$3,500.00.

### **Planning Board**

The Secretarial Support Line is reduced as the work is being completed by the Office Staff. Printing has increased in costs.

## **Zoning Compliance**

The new Officer feels the hours can be reduced. The Office staff is doing a lot of items that the Assistant might do.

Len asked if the Zoning Compliance Officer is a sub-contractor, asking the towns he covers. Len asked how he could be an employee as he works for other towns. Debbie noted that he is an employee. Debbie noted that different towns may do it differently. Debbie discussed the criteria he meets as an employee. The issues were discussed.

## **Zoning Board**

The Office Staff is completing many of the Secretarial Support duties. The printing of notices has been increased due to newspaper costs.

## **General Government Buildings**

The Selectmen have employed an architectural firm for the design of the Town Hall.

There was only one bid for Custodial Services.

The Meetinghouse Committee has asked to have additional funds. Virginia noted the Fund has almost \$30,000.00. Meadow noted they will be having the bathrooms constructed during the winter.

The groundskeeping will increase due to work to be completed at the Town Hall.

## **Police Department**

The increase is 5% for salaries. Dispatch, the gas line and equipment costs have increased.

## **Fire Department**

There is a new hire included in the salaries. Two existing members were promoted. There is a person who is just a paramedic and has to be paid overtime after 40 hours a week with 8 hours classified as overtime.

Equipment repairs were increased due to the increase in parts costs.

## **Road Administration**

The Road Agent has worked to contain their costs. Salt costs have increased.

Virginia noted the lines that were decreased, Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance.

Virginia indicated that BCEP may increase.

Hydrant Rental will increase.

### **Health Administration**

The Health Officer has done a lot for the Town.

### **Welfare**

The Welfare Officer wages were increased 5%.

Virginia noted the work being completed by the people at the Food Pantry.

### **Parks & Recreation**

There will be a smaller committee. They have included funds for a secretary. They have moved funds to keep the budget at a zero expense. There are six members on the committee with four active members currently.

Virginia noted the number of people that volunteer for the Town.

### **Conservation Commission**

They have included funds for a secretary. There are five members on the commission.

### **Library**

Meadow asked about the salary increase. Virginia noted that they are looking at employing a full time Children's Librarian.

Virginia noted that the largest increases are for salaries.

Linda asked about the Selectmen's minutes where the tax rate was set. She noted the increase is from the school.

Debbie discussed how the tax rate was determined.

Linda asked if the voters will be upset with the new tax rate. It was discussed many would be. Virginia noted the Town is doing what it can to keep the tax rate from increasing.

Meadow discussed that the students were not in school for much of last year asking about the grants, etc. It was discussed if towns other than those in our SAU had to return the emergency funds as Epsom has to.

Len discussed the average person does not understand what the Budget Committee discusses. He noted there is no choice if services are wanted. Virginia noted last year the Selectmen offered Zoom meeting to discuss the budget and six people participated. She noted that people do not come to meetings.

Issues with the SAU and other education costs were discussed. Also there was discussion as to how to get the budgets passed. Debbie noted that she will do some work to put together information for the taxpayers to explain the tax rates, etc.

Len asked why the Committee listens to the Selectmen present the budget tonight before the Department Heads present to the Committee. It was discussed that the Department Heads present to the Selectmen and the Selectmen determine a budget that is given to the Budget Committee. It was noted that the Department Heads are not obligated to come before the Budget Committee unless requested.

**Joy motioned to adjourn; Mary seconded the motion. The motion passed. Marylou adjourned the meeting at 9:25 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak  
Recording Secretary