

TOWN OF EPSOM
BUDGET COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 2, 2021

Attendees: Marylou Keane, Chairman; Joni Kitson, Vice Chairman; Gary Kitson, Water District Representative; Virginia Drew, Selectmen's Representative; Meadow Wysocki; Joy Sheehan; Mary Frambach; Joyce Heck; Len Gilman; Linda Hodgdon; Michael Muise, School Board Representative

Not in Attendance: Penny Graham; Meadow Wysocki

Other Attendees: Police Chief Preve; Lieutenant Michaels; Deb Sullivan; Kaitlin Camodge; Bob Paine; Glenn Horner (Virtual); Pat Curley; Celeste Decker; Andi Axman

Marylou opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Glenn reviewed the adjustments made to his budget since it was presented to the Board of Selectmen. These revisions were made based upon cases, etc., since that time. Glenn thought the revisions were necessary as he had a better sense of what might occur in 2022.

Glenn requested to increase the filing and recording fees from \$200 to \$240;

Gary motioned to increase the filing and recording fees from \$200 to \$240; Joy seconded the motion.

The Secretary Wages were discussed with Virginia asked if Glenn planned to double up on cases per meeting. Glenn noted he did when possible.

Discussion ensued with Len asking to wait to decide until they have the final numbers on this budget.

Glenn noted that the Board of Selectmen's meeting was over a month ago and the final budget he is presenting is a more accurate prediction of what could happen in 2022.

Mary asked if his write up would be changing. Glenn noted the only changes would be in his budget.

Gary rescinded his motion and Joy her second of the motion.

Linda asked if the Committee could obtain the revenue generated by the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).

Deb noted the ZBA revenue for 2021 was \$7,785.00.

Glenn discussed that there was a study completed last year that increased the ZBA application fee by \$100.00. He explained the reasons for the increase that included legal fees if needed and secretary wages if a second meeting was required. Virginia questioned not voting for the increases. Len suggested that Glenn should have added more to the budget when he was putting it together. Len noted he does not mind making minor changes, but there have been three budgets presented for the ZBA tonight.

Glenn reviewed the issues noting he was trying to make it more accurate based upon what has occurred in 2021.

Deb printed the revisions for the committee so they could have the accurate budget figures.

Library

Bob Paine reviewed the Library budget.

He noted that they are requesting an additional \$1,000.00 to purchase books. He noted that the cost of books increases about 5% per year. They would use the Library Trust Fund for additional purchases if needed.

Bob noted that Reference Materials goes with the Technical portion. He noted that they plan to increase their Broadband.

He noted they will do two deep cleaning per year. They have been installing new lights and have reduced the electricity line. There has been an increase in fuel costs since the budget was presented to the Board of Selectmen.

The postage has increased as they will be doing a mailing to all residents once a year. Linda noted the changes to their budget is \$1,510.00.

The Library Trustees are going to develop a new position of Clerk for 15 hours a week.

Bob noted that it takes 110 hours a week to staff the library. The Clerk position will allow the Director to go out into the community and also conduct events outside the building.

Bob noted they will be having a new Children's Librarian that will be called the Youth Services Librarian. It would service the zero to teen group in age.

He noted the remainder of the budget was the same as 2021. The pay increase is 5%. It was asked what the new position would be paid, \$15.00 hour. Gary asked the rates employees were paid. It ranges from \$10.00 to \$25.00 an hour.

Virginia motioned to increase the Library Management Services Line to \$91,598.00; Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed by a majority vote.

Police Department

Chief Preve noted that in 2021 they purchased new handguns. He noted when he did the original budget the mileage for the 2017 Explorer was 83,000.00.

Chief Preve discussed the budget and changes that were made. He discussed Dispatch increased \$3,500.00. Linda asked if they were told why. Chief Preve noted twenty towns were included in the Dispatch. He noted the Town is live, so they see what Dispatch sees for calls. He noted that people who are not live feel the towns that use this service are getting more service. Chief Preve noted with more calls Epsom would be paying more. Epsom has an increase in calls also. He did not have the number of calls available.

Chief Preve noted that having dispatch live is easier for the officers. He discussed that he is looking into printers in the cars, but that would be an increase in the budget.

Chief Preve noted the Medical Line is for blood draws.

Chief Preve noted the Board of Selectmen increased the Gas Line by \$3,000.00. He has spent over the 2021 budget amount already.

Chief Preve retained the funds for the DARE program as he would like to get that back into the school.

Chief Preve discussed having a cleaning company clean all the Town buildings including the Police Station.

The 2022 budget is a total increase of \$28,361.00. He noted the Board of Selectmen included a 5% salary increase. He discussed having an issue if the Budget Committee wanted to reduce the amount of the salary increase.

Gary discussed the 5% increase and the increase in Medicare for elderly. He also noted the increases in the retirement, insurance, etc. He noted the 5% does not take everything into consideration.

Linda asked the pay range of the officers. Chief Preve noted the lowest is paid \$19.50 with the highest paid officer being \$28.36.

Joni asked about the purchase of a vehicle. Chief Preve noted he is looking at purchasing a vehicle. He has been working with a dealer on the purchase. He noted that he has a Detail Fund Line that assists with the purchase of items including a vehicle. Marylou asked the amount in the Fund; it is around \$24,000.00 with \$15,000.00 to be used towards the purchase of a new vehicle.

Chief Preve noted that he is having a Warrant Article for an additional officer.

Len did not believe a budget would pass. Len asked what Chief Preve wanted revised if he had to make a revision.

Chief Preve noted he can use the Detail Line to pay for fuel (gas). He wants salary increases for his officers.

Chief Preve noted all area departments have good working relationships. He discussed that whatever salary increases were given should be same for everyone. Virginia noted that there is something said for having employees who have longevity.

Virginia discussed the Board of Selectmen is planning to have meetings to explain the budget to residents prior to the March vote.

Michael Muse verified if the budget does not pass, then the salaries do not increase. Chief Preve noted the study completed in the past and discussed the issues with the studies.

Marylou asked why the Chief is requesting an additional officer. He noted it is for the increase in calls and he would like to do more in the school. He discussed other times the officer could be used and to have another officer on the road. Marylou asked if this officer would require another car; it would not.

Len asked the wage he would want to start a new officer. Chief Preve noted \$18.00/hour going through the Academy, \$18.50/hour until he completes the field training and then \$19.00/hour after that. The wages were discussed.

Len suggested having a step increase system for the Police, Fire and Highway Department. He also thought it would be easier for the Budget Committee. It was noted it would have to be for all Town Employees.

The ZBA issues were discussed. Virginia noted that she feels the number of cases will level off or be less in the future. She feels that Glenn is a careful caretaker of his budget.

Joni motioned to approve the revisions of the ZBA budget by increasing the Secretarial pay from \$1,000 to \$1,200, Filing & Recording from \$200 to \$240 and Printing & Publishing from \$2000 to \$2530; Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Marylou noted the paper with the effect of the 5% pay increase with the total effect being \$60,967.00 or 1.6% of the total budget. Gary noted that he asked the total increase with the increases of all the lines, Linda noted it is 1.25%. Gary asked if the Town should be asking for more from the employees, i.e. paying a portion of the increase the insurance cost. The issues were discussed.

Joy noted it is more of a revenue issue rather than a tax issue. Len noted that Epsom is not a business friendly town. Len discussed the departments that are necessary vs. the departments that are not necessary, and those employees should be paid more.

Health Insurance

Joni asked the number of employees who take the health insurance. Deb noted fourteen employees currently and she included the new employees for the Fire Department and Library.

Joy noted the differences between what the Town pays for the insurance vs. what the school pays for its employees insurance.

BCEP

It was asked what the CIP was. Len explained it was funds being saved for the purchase of equipment and the closing of the old landfill.

It was noted Epsom's share would be \$252,952.80. Deb will include the new number in the budget. Betsy noted the number would not be finalized until the public hearing which she believes will be December 16.

Len commented that there are more changes to the budget after the budget figures have been presented to the Board of Selectmen.

The next meeting is December 9, 2021.

Minutes

The minutes of November 18, 2021 were reviewed and amended.

Joni motioned to approve the minutes of November 18, 2021 as amended; Mary seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Joy motioned to adjourn the meeting; Virginia seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Marylou adjourned the meeting at 9:29 P.M.

Respectfully,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary