

TOWN OF EPSOM  
BUDGET COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 4, 2022

**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; Penny Graham; Michael Muise, School Board Representative

**Not in Attendance:**

**Other Attendees:**

Marylou opened the meeting at 7:06 PM.

**Minutes**

Marylou discussed Mr. Connors did not have any changes to the minutes of December 9, 2021.

**Mary motioned to approve the minutes of December 9, 2021 as amended, Joni seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

The minutes of December 21, 2021 were reviewed and amended.

**Meadow motioned to approve the minutes of December 21, 2021 as amended; Mary seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

**EPSOM VILLAGE DISTRICT**

Gary Kitson reviewed the Epsom Village District budget discussing the revisions that were made for 2022.

Gary noted that a rate study was completed, and it was decided that the fee for a new connection to the system was increased to \$2,500.00 per residence.

Gary discussed the fees the District is charging when an owner adds an Accessory Dwelling Unit to the residence.

Meadow asked about the Water System Update Fund line. Gary noted it was a Capital Reserve Fund that money was used from for the redevelopment of Well #2.

The annual meeting for the District was discussed. Virginia expressed her appreciation for the Water Commissioners.

noted that it was a thankless job to be a Water Commissioner.

Gary discussed the District's proposed income for 2022 and the 2021 income.

## **TOWN BUDGET**

**Line 4221110 – FD Full Time Wages** - Virginia noted that they had a change in this line. The new hire is only a Firefighter/EMT and not a Paramedic as the position was originally advertised. Virginia noted \$20,000.00 could be removed from the line.

Len asked if the funds were removed from the budget and the person leaves would the funds be needed for a replacement. Virginia noted that the position has been open for about 6 months. She noted that the Chief feels the person will not leave.

Joni asked if there are any openings at the Fire Department at this time; Virginia indicated no. Reducing the budget by the \$20,000.00 was discussed.

**Gary motioned to reduce the Fire Department Full Time Wages line from \$295,974.00 to \$275,974.00; Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Penny asked if anyone was doing the Emergency Management Position. Virginia noted that it is being completed by the Fire and Police Chiefs and herself. Virginia noted they are revising the job description and discussed the position. Penny asked if it had to be a separate position. Virginia discussed the Safety Committee and its members.

**Line 4194310 – Site Design – Building** - Meadow asked about the amount in this line. She noted the Selectmen are asking for funds for site design for the Town Hall Renovation Project and if the funds are in the Warrant Article. Virginia discussed that the funds are included in the Warrant Article but could be used for something at the site. Virginia discussed the existing Office Location and the fact the landlord is able to move the Town Offices per the lease. She discussed the issues with the existing location. If the Warrant Article fails there won't be any money in that fund to use.

**Line 4131440 – Rental & Leases** - Linda asked about the increase in the Rentals and Leases Line. Virginia discussed they had started a new lease contract in 2020 with the rent reduced by \$320.00/month. Many items were removed from the lease at that time, i.e. type of space the Offices could be moved to. She discussed the rent paid in the past and the proposed rent to be paid in the future.

Linda asked if the Warrant Article passed what would be the earliest the Town Office could be moved. Virginia discussed the issues with no date determined.

Len asked about the \$12,000.00 in Line 4194310. He noted that if the Warrant Article passed would the money still be spent from this line, Virginia noted that if the Warrant

Article passed the money would not be spent. Marylou clarified the money would not be used if the Warrant Article passed. If the funds should be in the budget was discussed.

Mike asked that if the budget and Warrant Article both passed there would be \$24,000.00 for Site Design. The answer is no there wouldn't be.

**Len motioned to decrease Line 4194310 by \$11,900.00 to \$100.00; Meadow seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Joyce asked how much the budget would be increased with the 5% increase in salaries; Virginia noted \$62,500.00. Virginia noted if it was 4% increase the budget would increase by \$50,000.00. Linda noted a 4.5% increase would save \$6,250.00.

Len felt the Committee should not be discussing raises. He felt the Selectmen should decide the salaries based on reviews, etc. Len felt something should be done on the way salaries are decided.

Salaries and the way they are determined was discussed. Gary asked the amounts not spent out of previous budgets. Gary noted that every year about \$100,000.00 is returned to the Undesignated Fund. Len noted the Committee could make a motion to not add funds for salary increases and the Selectmen could still find the funds in the budget. Virginia noted there is a rational for the funds in the budget.

Penny asked when we would get a default budget. Marylou will ask for it for the next meeting. Linda asked when the revenue report would be completed. Marylou indicated not until a future meeting.

Linda noted that it is dangerous to give salary increases without explicit funds for the raises if the Selectmen were planning to have a \$100,000.00 surplus. Marylou noted raises should have been given at the end of the year so it would be included in the 2022 budget.

Gary suggested the Selectmen look at how the State does its steps and raises rather than other Towns.

Marylou noted the responses from the SAU for the Committees questions and if the Committee wants them at a meeting. Marylou noted it would have to be Thursday, not next week.

Meadow thought some of the responses to the questions were evasive. She noted they are making market adjustments after the budget is decided.

Joni asked why the SAU has reserve accounts. Joy noted that they have to have funds to pay vacation time, etc. if someone retires. It was discussed if this was and agree by the Towns in the past. Len noted the taxpayers do not have a say in that budget. Gary discussed that the SAU works for the taxpayers.

Virginia asked Mike to obtain the number of high school students that would be attending Pembroke Academy in 2022/23.

There was a consensus to ask the school to return next meeting.

Marylou asked to have Warrant Articles e-mailed so the members are able to review them before Thursday's meeting.

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

Marylou adjourned the meeting at 9:14 P.M.

Respectfully,

Betsy Bosiak  
Recording Secretary

## Conservation Committee

The Town Forest is 657 ACRES owned by the Town. And an Abutting 11 acre lot on Griffin Road.

There are a couple of very small parcels listed in the Town Report that I do not know the Total but should be in the Town report. We do not actively monitor them.

As far as land in Conservation I would need to research. We can try to take an inventory of those parcels 2 Hickey, 3 Harkness, Bronstein, and more.

We have 2 easement acquisitions in process Bloomfield and Harkness. We are hoping to complete Harkness this year.

We know this is not complete but we can work on taking inventory of all Conservation land and acreage.

