

TOWN OF EPSOM
BUDGET COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

Attendees: Marylou Keane, Chairman; Joni Kitson, Vice Chairman; Gary Kitson, Water District Representative; Meadow Wysocki, Selectmen's Representative; Joyce Heck; Floyd Graham; Len Gilman; Linda Hodgdon; Penny Graham; Nancy Wheeler

Not in Attendance: Michael Muise, School Board Representative; Mary Frambach;

Other Attendees: Patrick Connors, Epsom Central School Principal; Jack Finley, SAU 53 Superintendent

Marylou opened the meeting at 7:00 PM and members introduced themselves.

SCHOOL

Mr. Connors discussed the school Report Card. The school has approximately 370 students. He did not have numbers for Pembroke Academy or Homeschoolers.

Mr. Connors discussed a Bridge Program that is used to assist students who require additional support are located at the Epsom school system. Penny asked about staffing, Mr. Connors discussed the costs and staffing. The staff is different from regular staffing. The funds come from the SAU budget. Mr. Graham asked how the students from other districts come to Epsom. Mr. Connors noted their district arranges their transportation.

Extracurricular Activities – Goes by staffing and what activities students might want to join. There is a new music teacher who would like to start band and chorus.

The cost per pupil has not been updated from last year this was not yet available from the State.

As the teacher contract did not pass voters in March, they are under the same contract as last year. They are negotiating a new contract.

There are 3 math tutors (2 part-time/1 full-time) (3 days/week) and 3 reading tutors (2 part-time and 1 full-time) (5 days/week). There are grants paying those salaries. Currently all 3 of the of the math tutors, 1 reading tutor, and the full-time Reading Specialist positions are paid through a grant that ends in June of 2024. Len asked how much it would cost if the district would have to pay. Mr. Connors noted approximately \$25.00/hour with a 7-hour day.

They have not found anyone to fill the facilities manager or a night custodian. They have

a cleaning company coming in to clean the building. Mr. Graham asked if it was working, Mr. Connors felt it was. Len asked if having a 2-year contract with a company would work. Mr. Connors noted that the positions are under the support staff and that would have to be negotiated with contract discussions. It was discussed.

Mr. Connors noted the STAR Testing. He discussed the changes they have made for the testing. Linda noted the low scores for third and fifth grades. Penny asked if all the SAU schools used the same programs, she noted children who went into Pembroke Academy felt they needed additional instruction in some areas.

Marylou asked if they had a date to present to school budget to the Committee. Mr. Connors felt December 14. Meadow asked when they would have final numbers from last year, Mr. Finley thought October 10.

Marylou requested the binders early if possible. Mr. Finley noted changes have been made at the SAU.

Gary noted that it would be nice if the Town had a place for all boards to meet. Meadow noted that the BOS is looking at using a room at Epsom Healthcare.

Minutes

The minutes of June 22, 2023 were reviewed with no amendments.

Gary motioned to approve the minutes of June 22, 2023; Joni seconded the motion. The motion passed.

TOWN

Meadow reviewed the Town budget and revenues.

Marylou asked about the sale of assets in the revenue, it was a property on Black Hall Road.

Meadow noted there is Fire Department Detail money as there were people who worked at the Loudon Race Track.

Meadow noted that there are a lot of legal lines that are close to going over or will be before the end of the year. There have been Boards that have had a lot of legal concerns.

Meadow noted that Andrea has returned to the Town Office and will be doing the Board of Selectmen recording secretary work.

Meadow noted the telephone costs will be over due to the move to the new Town Offices. The Emergency Management line will also be over due to the telephone system used.

Linda asked about the Health and Dental Insurance line. Meadow noted they have to budget for full family insurance, but do not always use the funds due to vacancies and the plans used by the employees. Meadow noted that the insurances will have overages.

Planning Board Legal line will have additional costs of \$2,193.00. ZBA will have the same issues with \$600.00 in additional costs.

Meadow noted that next year there will legal funds for the Zoning Compliance Officer as he does not have any funds. Currently his legal funds come from the Selectmen's line.

The water bill for the Fire Department was in the general building funds and will be returning to the Fire Department budget.

General Government Buildings and Maintenance are down with Linda asking if they would remain down. Meadow noted that it should be about even as it goes until 12/31.

The Police Department will be over for the overtime line as they have a vacant position. It has not purchased a vehicle to date. He will not get one until next year as a new vehicle will cost more. Dispatch will also increase by \$10,000.00 next year. The vacancies were discussed.

Emergency Management – When the new generator was installed, they had to update electrical that cost additional funds not included in the grant. They are requesting additional grant funds to cover this cost.

Highway Department has over spent the part time help line by \$60.00.

Linda asked if gas and fuel would be okay for the Police and Fire Departments. Meadow noted they have not expressed a concern to date.

Meadow noted the Highway Department Heat Line was over spent; she was not aware if he had received a fill recently.

Parks & Recreation – There was a tree that fell on the concession stand with insurance paying to repair the building, but not to remove the tree. Floyd noted they usually pay to remove the tree from the building, but not remove it from the grounds. They had to replace the signs for the new ordinances and also ADA wording. They have completed several maintenance projects but had others that were unable to be completed.

Conservation Commission had plans to complete work to the parking area and other work but due to the rain they have not been able to complete all the work.

Economic Development Committee is up and running. Meadow noted that there will be costs for ERZ signs state permits.

Marylou discussed the budget committee budget. It was determined to keep the budget at

the same for 2024.

Marylou asked when the Selectmen would have the budget for presentation. It was noted the Department Heads would be meeting with the Selectmen in October. It was determined to have the presentation on Tuesday, November 7 at 7:00 PM.

The meeting schedule for 2023 – 2024 will be as follows:

November 7, 16, 30

December 7, 14 (School Presentation), 21 (Warrant Articles)

January 4, 9, 11 (Public Hearing)

A discussion occurred for department head presentations. Linda asked if the Selectmen gave Department Heads instructions for their budgets, they did not. Nancy noted that the Budget Committee liaisons should be hearing the presentations to the Selectmen and bring information to the Committee. Gary suggested departments give the Committee a written explanation of proposed increases so the Committee could note Selectmen reductions. Marylou will send out the Department Head schedule meetings with the Selectmen once she receives it. Len felt that all Department Heads should come in to present.

Len motioned to adjourn; Joni seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Marylou adjourned the meeting at 9:03 P.M.

Respectfully,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary