

TOWN OF EPSOM  
BUDGET COMMITTEE  
DECEMBER 3, 2019

**Present:** Marylou LaFleur-Keane, Chairman; Joni Kitson, Vice Chairman; Gary Kitson, Water District Representative; Len Gilman; Joyce Heck; Virginia Drew, Selectmen's Representative; Mary Frambach; Meadow Wysocki; Linda Hodgdon; Penny Graham

**Not in Attendance:** Tony Soltani; Bill Yeaton, School Board Representative

**Other Attendees:** Glen Horner; Nancy Wheeler; Cheryl Gilpatrick; Dawn Blackwell; Stewart Yeaton; Richard Frambach

Marylou opened the meeting at 6:35 PM.

Marylou noted that Linda had given the Committee some information she compiled. Linda reviewed the information that compared the default 2019 budget with the 2020 proposed Board of Selectmen budget and the Tax Rates for towns within the Greater Concord Region that was published in the Concord Monitor.

**Zoning Board of Adjustment – Glen Horner, Chairman**

Glen reviewed the proposed ZBA budget. Glen discussed the printing and publishing line requesting it be increased to \$1,600.00. He noted that he tries to keep under the budget amount. He also discussed the legal fees and that he does not use them unless necessary.

Glen discussed the number of cases in 2019 (11) although he plans for 12 to 14 cases each year.

**Joni motioned to increase the Zoning Board of Adjustment printing and publishing line (01-4191.3-550) to \$1,600.00, Virginia seconded the motion.**

Gary noted that the Committee is trying to reduce the budget. He discussed that if there was money remaining at the end of the year it would be returned to the Town.

Legal fees were discussed. Gary noted that if a case goes to court it comes out of the Selectmen's budget, but if there are just questions then they come out of the ZBA budget.

Glen noted that he does not request to have the attorney come to Board meetings as it would be an additional cost.

**The motion passed by a vote of 5 yes and 4 no.**

## **Town Clerk/Tax Collector – Dawn Blackwell**

Dawn noted that the increases in the Town Clerk budget are due to her hiring someone who could replace her when she retires. Dawn discussed the new person would have to have training to be a municipal agent to issue plates and other items for the State before she can do these functions.

Linda asked the amount to be paid the temporary person. Virginia noted that person was to be paid \$15.00/hour for 12 weeks.

Len discussed that the Selectmen should appoint the Town Clerk. It was discussed that the Town Clerk's position has to be elected with the Tax Collector's position being able to be appointed.

Dawn discussed that she would be working for two of the four elections next year.

The new person's salary was discussed. Gary noted that the Selectmen should have a salary scale to present to the new person.

Penny asked if the 15% increase included Dawn's buyout and also if the salary line includes the amount that Dawn currently makes plus the 50 cents an hour increase for the entire year. Dawn noted that the line is for half of the salary with the other half under the Tax Collector's lines. The line does include the 50 cent an hour increases in the salary.

Meadow noted that if the new person's salary was increased to \$20.00 an hour it would be approximately \$45,000.00 a year. Virginia noted that she has notes to bring the discussion to the Board of Selectmen regarding the salary.

Dawn noted that other lines are increased due to having four elections and she felt the new person should also attend all the trainings to be presented.

Penny asked Virginia what would happen if the person hired does not work out. Virginia noted that they would depend upon a recommendation from Dawn. If that occurred, they would have to get another person. The probation period was reviewed.

Mary asked if a background check would be done. It is not being done currently, but it was suggested to complete one.

Gary asked the number of hours the Town Clerk has to be open, 10 hours a week.

Dawn noted the Tax Collector's budget is similar to 2019 except that an audit has to be completed. Dawn noted that the audit amount (\$1,200) is not included in the budget (line 01-4150.4-301).

**Meadow motioned to add the line item (01-4150.4-301) in the amount of \$1,200.00 to**

**the budget for the audit, Mary seconded the motion.**

Gary discussed just putting one dollar in the line as the salary lien may be reduced.

**Meadow amended her motion to add just \$1,000.00 to the line, Mary seconded the amended motion. The amended motion passed.**

#### **Fire Department – Chief Stewart Yeaton**

Chief Yeaton noted that the budget is \$5,779.00 more than what the Committee approved from last year. He noted that included the extra pay period.

He noted the call volume is up. The increase in the part time line due to the use of part time personnel to fill vacant full-time positions. He noted that he has had a full-time person out for over a year and expects them to be out for some time in the future.

Chief Yeaton noted that they used to bottle their own oxygen. In the past oxygen was put on almost everyone. That is no longer done and as they use less now, they purchase oxygen as the machine owned by the Department is in need of expensive repairs. The equipment repair line has been increased. Chief Yeaton noted that the employee who conducted trainings at no cost has left the Department; they may have to pay someone in the future to conduct the trainings.

Chief Yeaton discussed if the budget needs to be cut do the Fire Road Maintenance line (01-4220,5-430). He noted that the line is usually used by other departments, not the Fire Department. It was discussed to keep just \$10.00 on the line.

**Gary motioned to reduce the Fire Road Maintenance line (01-4220.5-430) by \$2,490.00, Len seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Len asked the age of the equipment and trucks. Chief Yeaton noted the age of the various trucks and major equipment. Chief Yeaton noted that the Peterbilt is in need of new tires. Chief Yeaton noted that the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) requires the replacement of equipment at various ages.

Len noted that he does not want to go out to purchase new equipment just to purchase it. He would like to start having the sunset dates for the large equipment in the department's CIP. He noted that they should be following the CIP. Chief Yeaton noted that his biggest issue is personnel. He noted that he will be having a Warrant Article for another full-time person.

Virginia noted that the Board of Selectmen just received a letter from Concord Hospital praising treatment completed on a patient by the Department personnel. Chief Yeaton discussed the case which occurred in another town that they were covering. Virginia noted that many of calls take a lot of time. She did not know how to recruit personnel.

Linda asked the number of full timers, Chief Yeaton said 3 filled with one vacant and other with the person being on medical leave. They have interviews soon to fill the vacant position. He discussed the part time people he is using.

Joni asked how the benefits are considered. Chief Yeaton noted that the State controls many of the benefits for firefighters.

Joni asked if the renovations to the building would be completed in 2019. Chief Yeaton noted the contractor has put it off until the spring. He has encumbered the funds.

### **BCEP Budget Discussion**

Marylou noted that BCEP increased the increase Epsom has to pay from \$18,595 to \$36,328.00. The BCEP budget was discussed. Len noted that he obtained information from the Administrator regarding proposed increases.

Len and Penny noted that several years ago \$100,000.00 was added to the budget as a one-time cost. This amount has remained in the budget each year following.

Len noted there was a \$15,000.00 overall revenue drop this year due to a drop in recycling profits. Len discussed the BCEP did not meet the new level for PFOA testing according to the new levels set by DES. Len discussed the issues with PFOAs. He noted that is why the discussion with the closing of the former dump. He noted the procedures followed when the dump was closed and the new procedures that have to be followed.

Len's opinion is that to recycle costs more in labor, etc. than to not recycle. Len noted that today it does not pay to recycle.

The next BCEP meeting is December 12 at 5:00 PM to vote on the budget. Len asked Penny if the BCEP Committee received information that he was given by the Administrator. Penny noted the information was dated 10/26 and she did not attend that meeting.

Virginia noted that Epsom pays the most towards the BCEP costs as we have the largest population closely followed by Barnstead. She noted that very few of the people in Town use the BCEP. It was discussed that many residents pay to have their trash picked up at their residences and trucked to other locations. Penny noted that the schools can send their trash to BCEP for free. It was discussed that Barnstead has the heaviest school dumpsters. Len noted that it is due to the amount of food they dispose of.

Len discussed the repair costs for the BCEP truck. He discussed it is due to the electronics in new vehicles.

Linda asked if BCEP reviews its budget, Penny noted only the Administrator and Treasurer look at the budget. It was noted that BCEP is to have a budget committee made of members from each town.

Virginia noted that she has looked at the Website and could not locate the BCEP meeting dates. Linda asked if the Selectmen should contact the Selectmen in the other towns to see if they are also unhappy with what is occurring.

Gary asked what would happen if the majority of the BCEP members vote no. Penny noted that usually only one other person and she votes no. It was discussed it would be costly for Epsom to withdraw from the BCEP. The issues were discussed.

Joni asked the pay increase for BCEP employees. Penny did not remember the pay increase. Virginia asked if the committee reviews the salary increases, Len noted they did when he was the representative. He noted that most of the employees have been there for 18 to 20 years so the salaries are high.

Len discussed the employees got 10% of the recycled material money in the past. Len discussed the costs to recycle material. He thought that someone should go to the facility and watch the time it takes to prepare material for recycling. Len noted that the labor costs are prohibitive. Len thought we have a new Administrator who should look at everything.

Gary asked if the Committee could request a copy of the BCEP budget and a balance of any funds they have. Penny noted they have a monthly report on those items.

### **Minutes of November 12, 2019**

The minutes of November 12, 2019 were reviewed and amended.

**Gary motioned to approve the minutes of November 12, 2019 as amended, Mary seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.**

During the discussion of the minutes Virginia noted that besides the \$10,000.00 from the Undesignated Fund the Selectmen also used the \$45,000.00 additional funds received from the State to reduce the 2019 tax bill.

Penny asked if any employees received salary increases. Virginia noted no town employees, but the Library gave salary increases.

Virginia asked when the Highway Department presentation would be rescheduled, Marylou noted Thursday.

Gary noted he would like to present the Water Department budget on December 17. Marylou discussed the presentations for Thursday.

**Meadow motioned to adjourn; Gary seconded the motion. The motion passed. Marylou adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak  
Recording Secretary