

**Town of Epsom  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes  
September 19th, 2022 at 6:00pm**

Virginia Drew, Chair  
Cheryl Gilpatrick  
Meadow Wysocki

Approved: **Wysocki / Gilpatrick**  
Vote: **In favor, 3-0**

**Call to Order**

Ms. Drew called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Staff present: Megan Rheaume, Board of Selectmen Recording Secretary; Jennifer Johnson, Administrative Assistant; Deb Sullivan, Finance Administrator; Ted Virgin, Emergency Management Director; Stewart Yeaton, Fire Chief; Lieutenant Brian Michael.

Others present: Gary Kitson, Kevin Reeves, both of the Village Water District, and virtual attendees.

Chief Yeaton led the pledge of allegiance.

**Review and Accept or Amend Agenda:**

Ms. Gilpatrick added two non-public sessions.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to accept the agenda as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki.  
**Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

**Finance Administrator Report:**

Ms. Sullivan updated the Board regarding the FSA plan with Health Trust as discussed at the previous meeting. She noted the HSA option is for health plans that have high deductibles, which the Town does not currently have. She asked the Board if they would like to stick to the current FSA plan. The Board agreed.

Ms. Sullivan provided the Board with an updated Expenditures to Date report for them to review at their leisure.

**Administrative Assistant Report:**

Ms. Johnson has been learning payroll and accounts payable with Ms. Sullivan in preparation for her departure. She has also been researching vehicle titles for Town-owned vehicles. The Police Department will be sending one of their cruisers to auction.

Ms. Johnson presented the estimated cost of updating the Town's website. The quote came in at \$800. The Board agreed this is a fair price considering the updates that will be made. Ms. Johnson will present a mock up for the Board to review at a future meeting before any changes are made. She has also been researching quotes for new printer and copier equipment for the

Town Office, Fire Department and Police Department, noting that the contract on the current machines expires in January.

**Signature/Approval Items:**

Vacation Extension Request:

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to approve the vacation extension request. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki.  
**Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

OMRC Donation:

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to accept the \$200 donation to the Historic Meetinghouse Trust Fund.  
**Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

**Assessing Signature Approval:** None.

**Discussion:**

Election Day overview: Ms. Gilpatrick noted that the Supervisor's of the Checklist registered 53 new voters at the Primary Election on September 13<sup>th</sup>. The total for the two food orders for that day came to \$310.85. She discussed making some new directional signs for election days, so people will have an easier time navigating through the Bible Church.

Ms. Wysocki discussed some residents who expressed concern that their names were removed from the Voter Checklist. The voters indicated they had voted in the last five elections. Ms. Drew noted that by law, the Supervisors of the Checklist are required to purge the list periodically. Discussion ensued regarding the process of changing party affiliations.

ARPA Funds: Ms. Sullivan discussed the \$499,000 received from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). \$400,000 of it was allocated to the Town Hall renovation project. The remaining \$99,000 has yet to be allocated. A portion of the remaining funds could potentially be utilized for a well redevelopment project for the Village Water District. The remaining portion could possibly be used for wage increases for the Police and Fire Departments.

Village Water District: Mr. Reeves explained how the Water District is handling updates and well rehabilitation. The District maintains two wells, one of which they have already rehabbed using funds from their Capital Reserve Fund. Ms. Sullivan noted that ARPA funds cannot be used to replenish a Capital Reserve Fund. Mr. Kitson noted some of the proposed funds could be used for an automated PH System. The Board requested a detailed accounting of the costs. Discussion ensued regarding how the PH needs to be monitored daily. There are matching grants available to implement a third well, but would not be affordable for the District. Their funds are predominantly raised by user fees and any Warrant Articles. The Board reviewed the balance of the District's Capital Reserve Fund.

Fire Department: Chief Yeaton discussed his full-time employees and their rank and length of employment with the Town. The Board reviewed their pay rates. Chief Yeaton discussed the

full-time fire fighter/paramedic position that remains open. He noted the pay rate is not competitive enough to secure new employees, as well as to retain current employees. He would also like to add an additional fire fighter/paramedic/EMT to his roster via a Warrant Article, and utilize a different line in his budget to possibly raise the pay rates of his other full-time employees. Ms. Wysocki inquired about an increase using ARPA funds for the part-time and stipend volunteers. Chief Yeaton noted he has funds in his budget for that for this year. Ms. Gilpatrick inquired if there are any part-time or stipend volunteers that could be hired on full time. Chief Yeaton noted he has tried, but none are available on a full-time basis, and if they were, the pay rates are not attractive enough for them to leave their other employment. He stated the Police Department has been assisting the Fire Department, even though they are short-staffed as well. The Fire Department has received roughly 795 calls so far this year.

Police Department: Lieutenant Michael discussed the list of employees and their length of employment with the Department. He noted they receive/respond to roughly 500 calls each month. He has been researching the salaries of the Departments in surrounding towns, and noted their salaries are all higher for less time on the job compared to long time officers employed in Epsom. The Police Department has also dealt with officers leaving to go to other municipalities for an increase in salary, and Lieutenant Michael discussed the difficulty replacing officers due to insufficient salary. Ms. Drew discussed different pay increase options. Mr. Virgin echoed approval of what Chief Yeaton and Lieutenant Michael have presented. The Board reviewed various scenarios for proposed wage increases for the emergency services departments utilizing the ARPA Funds, and gave consensus to raise wages for full time Police and Fire Department employees.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to use ARPA funds through the end of 2023 not to exceed \$60,000 for a \$2 hourly increase for full-time Police and Fire Department employees, not to include salaried or administrative positions. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

The Board discussed ARPA funds that could potentially assist in funding the automated PH system for the Village Water District. They will discuss this at the next meeting. They also discussed a \$1 hourly wage increase for hourly employees, and the length of time available to utilize the ARPA funds. Ms. Gilpatrick suggested each Board member reach out to their Boards and Departments to inquire about wage satisfaction.

Chief Yeaton and Mr. Virgin discussed the Purchasing Policy, and concerns they have with the RFP process versus the number of available vendors. The Board noted there is an option to request a waiver of the Purchasing Policy. They will be looking at updating this policy in the near future.

Budget Planning: Ms. Sullivan noted the draft budget should be presented to the Board of Selectmen at the next meeting.

**Requested Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II ( a ):**

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II ( a ) at 9:14pm.  
**Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote:** Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to exit the non-public session at 9:36pm. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki.  
**Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote:** Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to seal the minutes. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote:** Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye. **Decisions were made.**

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II ( c ) at 9:37pm.  
**Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote:** Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to exit the non-public session at 9:50pm. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki.  
**Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote:** Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to seal the minutes. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote:** Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye. **Decisions were made.**

**Approval of Minutes:** Public 9/6/2022

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to approve the public minutes of 9/6/2022 as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

**Selectmen's Reports:**

Ms. Wysocki:

Conservation Commission: Conservation Commission was not able to meet in September due to lack of a quorum. They have postponed the meeting until October. They would like to establish and write ordinances and/or bylaws similar to those of the Park Commission.

Health Officer: The Health Officer has received his conditional three-year appointment. He is required to complete three hours of training before approval of his final appointment.

Safety Committee: The Safety Committee will be reviewing and adopting an updated Safety Manual. The deadline to adopt it is October 18, 2022. They will be meeting October 12<sup>th</sup>.

Budget Committee: Ms. Wysocki noted the Budget Committee has a meeting on Thursday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. She would like to discuss a virtual option for upcoming meetings.

Emergency Management Director: The EMD has inquired about moving phone lines for the backup Emergency Operations Center to the new Town Hall space when the project is finished.

Ms. Gilpatrick:

Highway Department: The Highway Department has finished up the projects with the excavator, and it has been returned. The line striping has been completed on North Pembroke Road, Goboro Road, New Orchard Road, and North Road. Crack sealing has been completed on New Rye Road. They will be getting ready for winter for the next couple of weeks.

Tax Collector: The Tax Collector reports that any property owners with payment plans have been keeping up to date, and one plan has been revised. There are three properties still outstanding that are occupied by residents. They are all mobile homes in parks, and have been sent letters asking if they would like assistance either through welfare, or by setting up a payment plan. The BOS will need to decide about deed waivers or if they would like to move forward with deeding these properties. The Tax Collector also noted there are some camper owners that no longer live in NH, and all the letters she sent came back as undeliverable from multiple addresses. Ms. Gilpatrick hopes to work with her and Ms. Johnson on getting a better process in place regarding campers.

Town Clerk: The Town Clerk reports that residents have another week to pay dog licenses without the civil forfeiture fines. Those letters will be going out next week sometime, and then the police will be notified.

Elections: General Election absentee ballot applications are available. They have received about 25 so far.

Planning Board: The Planning Board is currently working on updating the Master Plan and the Capital Improvement Plan. A sub-committee has been established to get an early start on the zoning amendments for next March. The public hearing for Deep Roots Brewery went very well, and the waivers and application were approved.

Webster Park: The Park Ordinances will be ready for approval and signature at the next BOS meeting. There are still some reservations coming up over the next six weeks. The Commission hopes to have the garage worked on this fall, and do a few other improvements, such as painting.

Ms. Drew:

BCEP: The BCEP budget subcommittee will be meeting on Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. The BCEP facility planning committee will be meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup> at 9am.

OMRC: The OMRC will be slowing their work in the Meetinghouse due to the items currently in storage there. Once those items are moved, they will be exploring an LCHIP grant for painting.

Library: The Library has a few large budgetary issues. Currently the heating and a/c system needs replacing or updating, as well as all the exterior doors need replacing due to rotting at the bottom and warping.

Town Hall renovation project: All the items that were previously being stored in the Old Town Hall have been removed. The construction manager expressed his appreciation.

**5 minutes for public discussion:** None.

**Correspondence – FYI:** None.

**Other Business:** None.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business to come before the Board at this time, **Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to adjourn at 10:30pm. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Rheaume

Board of Selectmen Recording Secretary