

**Town of Epsom  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes  
November 1, 2022 at 6:00pm**

Virginia Drew, Chair  
Cheryl Gilpatrick  
Meadow Wysocki (virtual)

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

**Call to Order**

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

Staff present: Megan Rheame, Board of Selectmen Recording Secretary; Jennifer Johnson, Administrative Assistant; Jerrica Vansylavong, Finance Administrator.

Others present:

Ms. Wysocki led the pledge of allegiance.

**Review and Accept or Amend Agenda:**

Ms. Wysocki added a discussion regarding the Fire Department part-time wage increase, and a discussion regarding the State bid purchasing via GSA.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to accept the agenda as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki.

**Motion passed via roll call vote: Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye.**

**Finance Administrator Report:** Ms. Vansylavong received the Moose Plate Grant final report pertaining to the stained-glass windows at the Meetinghouse. Ms. Wysocki noted she will have it completed by the November 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Ms. Vansylavong requested a signature from the Board for permission to enroll in the upcoming New Hampshire Municipal Government accounting class. The Board signed the letter. She also requested a vote from the Board for a 3% increase in the Assessing and Software line in the Selectmen's Budget from \$21,800 to \$21,974.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to adjust the Assessing and Software line in the budget, which is account # 4156312, to \$21,974, which will adjust the bottom-line budget by \$174. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote: Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye.**

Ms. Vansylavong requested the Board's acceptance for donations to the Old Meetinghouse and the Epsom Welfare Department.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to accept \$512 of revenue from donations for additional funds from the Paint Night and Old Home Weekend, and an anonymous \$1000 donation to the Old Meetinghouse Historic Trust Fund. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote: Cheryl, aye; Meadow, aye; Virginia, aye.**

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to accept the \$500 donation to the Town of Epsom Welfare Department. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote:** Cheryl, aye; Meadow, aye; Virginia, aye.

Ms. Vanslyavong reviewed the Expenditures to Date report. The Board discussed what line to utilize for the cost of the junk cleanout from a Town-owned property.

**Administrative Assistant Report:**

Ms. Johnson discussed quotes she received from Toshiba for a new 3-in-1 printer at the town office. She noted Toshiba has been awarded the bid through the State, and they are able to offer the Town a discount. The quote for a comparable black and white printer is \$620.76 yearly, which includes a service agreement and toner. A color printer would be \$969.48 yearly with the same terms as the black and white printer. The printing allotment is to be determined. The Board gave consensus to move forward with the purchase of the color printer, which would replace the black and white and color printers.

Ms. Johnson noted the current contract for the Town's cleaning company is expiring in December, and inquired if the Board would like to renew it. The cleaning company has said they would be willing to extend the current contract until the end of March 2023. The Board agreed, and will revisit this in March.

Ms. Johnson reviewed the contract with Rymes for propane. The Town is enrolled in a program with a discounted rate, which would be effective through April of 2023. The Board reviewed the terms of the contract. The deadline for the Town to lock in the discounted rate is November 4<sup>th</sup>. The Board agreed to sign the contract and lock in the discounted rate.

Ms. Johnson updated the Board regarding insurance for the Highway Department's equipment rental. She noted that coverage for equipment does not cover the value of the equipment. The Town's insurance company advised her to add the piece of equipment to the Town's policy for the number of days it will be rented, and remove it after it is returned.

**Signature/Approval Items:**

Septage Agreement: The Board gave consensus to sign the Septage Agreement with the Town of Allenstown.

**Assessing Signature Approval:** None

**Discussion:**

Budget Update: Ms. Drew noted the BCEP budget would likely have remained flat if not for wage increases. Any of the proposed increases have not been finalized. The Town of Chichester has proposed a wage increase of 8% for the BCEP staff, but there was an agreement to go with a 6% overall wage increase. The Board expressed great concern over this kind of increase. Discussion ensued regarding having a dollar amount wage increase as opposed to a percentage. She also noted that the date for the BCEP public hearing is December 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm.

Petty Cash Policy: Ms. Vansylyavong distributed a draft petty cash policy for the Board to review and approve. The Board reviewed it and made edits. Discussion ensued regarding the difference between having a Petty Cash policy and a Change Fund Policy. The Board agreed to institute a Change Fund Policy in lieu of having a Petty Cash Policy. Ms. Vansylyavong will finalize the draft and review it with the Board at the next meeting.

Office Schedule: Ms. Gilpatrick discussed the work schedule for the office staff with the Board. She noted that all hours that the town office is open will have proper coverage. She also went over the best ways for the Board members to get in touch with the office staff during the workday. The Board agreed it would be a good idea to make an informational sheet with the office hours and office staff schedule to distribute to all the Department Heads, and Board Chairs Commissioners, to help alleviate requests made at the end of the day that may put an office employee over their 40 hours. Ms. Gilpatrick discussed the procedures and protocols for the office staff regarding scheduling time off and calling in sick. She also discussed meeting attendance for the office staff. The Board would also like each staff member to review their job descriptions and suggest any edits.

Agenda Policy: Ms. Gilpatrick reviewed the current Agenda Policy with the Board and asked if there are any changes they would like made. Discussion ensued regarding the deadline time to have the agenda completed. The Board suggested edits to the Policy and discussed the changes.

Payment Agreement: The Board reviewed an ongoing payment agreement. They discussed the letter received from the payee's attorney that would guarantee payment if that is possible. The Board noted the letter is not clear as to whether or not the payee would be receiving the settlement. Discussion ensued regarding the details of the payee's potential settlement. The Board noted they would like a new, more strict payment agreement written up, as the payment agreement has been in effect for a while with minimal effort on the payee's part to make payments. The Board wrote up a draft of the new agreement with more strict terms.

Black Hall Road Property Update: Ms. Gilpatrick noted she worked with the junk removal company with the cleanout of the Black Hall Road property. All items have been removed with the exception of a few small items and chemicals. The remaining items can be brought to BCEP for disposal. She noted there was a total of 117 yards and 14,000 pounds worth of trash and items removed from the property. The mobile home itself is in poor condition, and will likely be deemed uninhabitable. The safety inspector will likely have to inspect the property and make that determination. Ms. Gilpatrick praised the excellent work the Trash Bandits did cleaning out this property. They went above and beyond and also mowed and removed some brush.

The Board discussed the total fees incurred thus far for this property. They would like to move forward with finding a realty company to facilitate the sale of the property. Ms. Gilpatrick noted that a letter of intent to sell will need to be sent to the former owner before it can be listed. The Board reviewed the letter of intent to sell and agreed to move forward with sending it.

Discussion ensued regarding the proper procedure for advertising for a realtor.

Election Update: Ms. Gilpatrick noted the Town Clerk has been scheduling Ballot Clerks. Bob McKechnie is available for the day to be the Selectmen Pro-tem. There are volunteers lined up to help with the setup. The Deputy Town Clerk will also be available to be a Ballot Clerk.

There were 123 absentee ballots received that will need to be processed. Residents have until 5pm on Tuesday to submit their absentee ballots to either the Town Office or the Bible Church. The Town Clerk will determine the appropriate place to submit them. Signs will be posted at the school indicating that the voting will be taking place at the Epsom Bible Church. The Town Clerk and the Moderator have tested the ballot machine, and it is all set for election day. The Town Clerk's office will be closed, but the Selectmen's office will remain open.

NHMA Survey: Ms. Wysocki noted the NHMA survey is due on December 14<sup>th</sup>. The survey pertains to economic conditions in towns and cities. NHMA would like one response per municipality. Ms. Wysocki offered to complete the survey in conjunction with the Finance Administrator if the Board would like to participate. The Board gave permission for Ms. Wysocki to complete the survey.

Fire Department Part-time Wage Increase: Chief Yeaton submitted a request for a wage increase for the part-time Fire Department employees to be effective November 1st:

EMT increase \$1 hourly.

Advanced EMT increase \$1.50 hourly.

Paramedic increase \$2.00 hourly.

Chief Yeaton noted in his request that the funds would come from this year's budget, and would not affect his budget for 2023. The Board gave permission for the increases, which will be effective October 29th.

**Motion by:** Ms. Wysocki to increase the part-time hourly rate for the Fire Department as \$1.00 hourly for the EMT, \$1.50 hourly for the Advanced EMT, and \$2.00 hourly for the Paramedic effective 10/29/2022. **Second by:** Ms. Gilpatrick. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote: Cheryl, aye; Meadow, aye; Virginia, aye.**

GSA Bulk Purchasing: Ms. Wysocki discussed a request from the Emergency Management Director to participate in bulk purchasing through US GSA (Government Services Administration) in tandem with the Town's purchasing policy. The program is available to municipalities, and there is a yearly fee of \$50 to participate. The purchasing program is similar to the state bid process. The Board would like more information on this before making a decision.

#### **Selectmen's Reports:**

Ms. Wysocki:

Emergency Management: Ms. Wysocki noted the Emergency Management Director (EMD) is looking at a possible grant for a new radio system that would integrate the Police, Fire and Highway Departments, as well as the School and the Emergency Operations Center. The current radio system is outdated and is costly to update on the required yearly basis.

The grant for the new EOC generator is in the environmental studies stage. Gemini Electric will be able to start the ordering process for the new generator, but in order to process they will need a letter of intent from the Town because of the grant funding.

The EMD has also been speaking with Gemini Electric regarding the service contract for the new generator. There could be a possible discount for multiple generators enrolled in the service contract if the other Town Departments would like to participate.

Ms. Wysocki noted the EMD has been working with the EMD from Pittsfield on a proposed a tabletop training for next spring. Also, the EMD trailer has new tires and is now mobile.

Fire Department: Chief Yeaton has been in contact with Ford Motor Company regarding the blown engine in the new ambulance. There is no date yet for when the new engine will be available. He is also in the process of interviewing a candidate for the Fire Fighter/EMT position.

Ms. Gilpatrick:

Conservation Commission: Ms. Gilpatrick attended the recent Conservation Commission meeting in Ms. Wysocki's absence. They discussed the Keeler subdivision and the wetlands permit that is involved with that subdivision. The Commission is working on drafting their own by-laws.

Parks and Recreation: Ms. Gilpatrick noted the new fencing has been installed near the small pavilion, and thanked the Park Commission members for their help with the work. They are also working on removing a large pine tree, and other various small projects.

Town Clerk: The Town Clerk has just over 100 dogs left that need to be registered.

Tax Collector: The Tax Collector is waiting for the new tax rate from the Department of Revenue before preparation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half tax bills can start.

Ms. Drew:

Police Department: Drug Take Back Day was on Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, and Lieutenant Michael reported that it went well. They had a hiring event and received a few candidates, but none could pass the physical portion to move on in the process.

ZBA: The ZBA met on Wednesday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, and will be meeting again on November 16<sup>th</sup>. ZBA members asked for a review of some of the businesses on Route 4, Black Hall Road, as well as an update on a development project on Lord's Mill Road that has not had any progress in a number of years.

Zoning Compliance Officer: The ZCO and the Deputy ZCO are both reviewing the businesses that have received variances to ensure that they are being adhered to. They are also seeking a resolution with a business operating in a residential area without applying for a variance.

Library: Nothing new to report but encourage everyone to sign up for the Library's monthly newsletter.

OMRC: Tracey Stephens has stepped down from the Committee and they hope to have at least one more new member. The Committee will meet on November 10<sup>th</sup> at the Library. The grant for the final window has been received. The Stewardship Report is also due, and will be worked on over the next few weeks.

Renovation update: Ms. Drew has received great communication from the contractors working on the project. They are always quick to respond to questions and concerns, as well as reach out with information or concerns on the project.

The project site work is moving forward, though they ran into a few issues with drainage near the building and had to contact NHDR for approvals with a small change in the exterior in the area of the new entry vestibule.

In the Meetinghouse lower level, the electrician had a computer/IT drop in the town file storage room (record retention), but not in the Welfare office. Ms. Drew asked that they make sure that there is one in the Welfare office, but asked that they keep the outlet in the records room as well. They agreed to make sure to have the IT drop in both areas. There is no real cost difference to have both, and the space will have more flexibility for future uses. The electrical work has been underway and the electrician will make sure to have electrical access for the upper level of the Meetinghouse as well.

Ms. Drew has made sure that the contractors and electrician work with the Town's Emergency Management Director to ensure that the Town Hall has the appropriate phone lines, as that will be a designated Emergency Operations Command Center. Plumbing work is also fully underway, and Ms. Drew has forwarded the proposed fixtures to the BOS members for their approval.

The Food Pantry needs to know how to proceed with their donation towards the renovation project. They are very excited to see how quickly things are moving with the project. There are some logistics to be handled by the contractors, as they have seven freezers and two refrigerators, which need to be placed along a wall, so the electrician is going to have six outlets on the wall plus three more along the back wall. This allows for the janitor's sink to be placed outside the bathroom area.

Ms. Drew has made sure to go to the site each week to take photos of the grounds, the Town Hall and the lower level of the Meetinghouse to document the progress being made. Those photos are uploaded for staff and BOS members. She would like to create a page on the Town's website to post the photos there as well. The Board agreed with the idea.

**5 minutes for public discussion:**

**Approval of Minutes:** Public 10/17/2022.

**Motion by:** Ms. Gilpatrick to approve the public minutes of 10/17/2022 as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Drew. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote:** Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye.

**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 9:54pm. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously via roll call vote:** Meadow, aye; Cheryl, aye; Virginia, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Rheume

Board of Selectmen Recording Secretary