

**TOWN OF EPSOM
Department Head Meeting
Epsom Library Meeting Room, 1606 Dover Road, Epsom
May 2, 2023, 6:30PM**

PRESENT

Cheryl Gilpatrick, Chair; Virginia Drew, Vice Chair; Meadow Wysocki, Selectman; Joe Wysocki, Parks and Recreation; Justin Guth, Zoning Compliance Officer; Stuart Yeaton, Fire Chief; Kaitlin Camidge, Library Director; Robin Blaise, Conservation Commission; Bob McKechnie, Planning Board; Glenn Horner, Zoning Board of Adjustment; Scott Elliott, Road Agent; Patricia Hickey, Overseer of Welfare; Brian Michael, Chief of Police; Ted Virgin, Emergency Management Department; MaryLou LaFleur, Budget Committee; and Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Gilpatrick called the meeting to order at 6:00PM.

Ms. Gilpatrick stated the office Administrative Assistant has left the Town Offices and the position will be posted shortly; she stated emails can still be sent to the same address and the Board will be monitoring that inbox.

Ms. Gilpatrick stated door codes for the Town Offices, file room or lower level of the meeting house can be made available to the heads of all Boards and Committees.

Ms. Gilpatrick stated risk training information went out last week; if anyone is interested in the training, it will help with insurance coverage. Ms. Drew encouraged all Department Heads to take the courses, noting they are quick and easy. Ms. Wysocki stated all board and committee members will also be encouraged to participate.

Ms. Gilpatrick stated the Board is in the process of reviewing and updating all the Town policies, specifically the purchasing policy. She encouraged Department Heads to review the policy and offer their input.

Ms. Gilpatrick stated they have the titles for all vehicles to maintain in a fireproof safe at the Town Offices should anyone need a copy.

Ms. Drew asked if everyone has a Town email address and asked if anyone does not, they need to move forward with getting it set up. Chief Michael stated they are having more and more problems with getting warrants and subpoenas because they don't have a .gov address. It was noted a .org email address is not as secure as .gov. Chief Michael explained there are security processes for .gov addresses that are more stringent than other domains. Ms. Drew asked Chief Michael to get her more information.

Welfare

Ms. Hickey stated so far this year, she has talked to many people on the phone for interviews; people don't want to do all the paperwork and only want the free money. She stated when people find out it's a

loan, they walk away. She stated there have been more older people who live in mobile home parks, and she is looking into the legal issues related to that. Ms. Hickey stated that overall, things are going well.

Fire Department

Chief Yeaton stated they are up to 400 calls; he stated Elliot Brown finished his last shift today and that leaves two openings to fill in the department. Chief Yeaton stated they are going to try to hire a paramedic, but he knows the City of Concord has dropped requirements to have only requirements for advanced EMTs; he stated its going to be difficult to fill the position.

Chief Yeaton stated the two fires on Dover Road were confirmed to be arson; he stated its is not believed to be random and there is no concern to the public.

Chief Yeaton stated Ambulance 1 is back from the shop now; he spoke with Ford Motor Corporation today and wasn't able to get an extension of warranty, but it is good to have it back in service as it has a power lift in the rear.

Chief Yeaton stated the 2008 Tahoe will be going to the State of NH auction next month; he stated although the Board voted to sell it, he doesn't believe private sale is permitted without having a sealed bid and it was confirmed that the vehicle was not going to be going to a municipality. He stated they are working closely with the Police Department to deal with some areas with a lot of drugs. He stated he would like to have a non-public discussion with the Board of Selectmen at some point to discuss personnel.

Chief Yeaton stated there will be a CPR course on July 7, 2023, at the Fire Station. Ms. Gilpatrick stated it is open to employees and members of boards or committees.

Mr. Guth asked if it would help the Town to put out call log information; he stated it helps give the Town the ability to really see what is going on with the Police and Fire Departments. Ms. Drew stated her concern is that all the departments are already short-staffed. She stated there are other social media pages available for alerts.

Library

Ms. Camidge stated the library stats are going up and over the last week, during spring break, they signed up 15 more families. She stated they are working on two grants that were awarded to the Library. One through Granite United Way, which will be for creating an outdoor musical reading area. She stated they were also awarded a National Family Place Grant and targets ages birth through three years of age. Ms. Camidge stated the program will help to get families with young children coming into the library and will consist of two, five week events that will feature various professional resources. She stated attendance in the story time is going up as well.

Ms. Camidge stated they are having a problem with drainage around the building so that is something that needs to be addressed.

Ms. Camidge stated they have had a few homeless individuals come into the library; she stated they have helped them with job applications. Ms. Gilpatrick asked how the item and equipment borrowing program is going. Ms. Camidge stated its hard to gauge what will be of interest but overall the program is going well; she stated these items were a grant collaboration with Pembroke and Pittsfield libraries so different items are also available as well.

Parks & Recreation Commission

Mr. Wysocki stated year-to-date that about 15% of the annual budget for the Park and Recreation Commission has been expended. He stated the Commission has prioritized 10 different projects for the year; these projects are mostly completed by volunteers. Mr. Wysocki stated they anticipate the total expenses to be a little over \$300 higher than last year due to cost increases. He stated to date, 15 event requests have been received so far for the season; total events last year were 31. Mr. Wysocki stated they are preparing a post-event survey to help prioritize future improvements and they are planning to do a playground refresh, along with a replacement of the slide. He noted a part of a tree fell onto the concession stand; they are working through the insurance claim process as well as lining up contractors for the repairs. Mr. Wysocki stated due to changes in the Park Ordinance, they are working on getting new signs throughout the park. He stated maintenance projects include installation of a sink on the bathroom bunker, painting, and rehab projects. He noted in terms of risks, there are a number of old trees in the park; Bartlett Tree has offered to do an assessment of the trees and he suggested doing that.

Ms. Gilpatrick stated the dates have been set for the Old Home Weekend, August 11th, 12th and 13th.

Highway Department

Mr. Elliott stated this week they paved Meadowlark Lane and Center Hill Road; he is looking for a per diem employee as using the Department of Corrections program is not consistent. Mr. Elliott stated he is having a hard time finding a rental for an excavator for the summer; he stated is now working on quotes for a lease for five years and believes it will be beneficial to have it year-round, noting it will come with a maintenance policy as well. He stated he expects to need about \$10,000 more than what he is paying to rent the equipment for just four months. He noted his budget will need to increase next year as all materials are going up. Mr. Elliott stated the winter budget took a big hit this year; he stated there weren't a lot of storms, but the storms there were, lasted longer and used a lot of salt. He stated there was also a lot of damage to the equipment. Ms. Gilpatrick asked Mr. Elliott if he plans to provide a cost assessment for the excavator lease. He confirmed he would.

Conservation Commission

Ms. Blaise stated the Conservation Commission has two seats open on the Commission and they are trying to fill those. She stated they are working to expand the trail system within the Town Forest and are going to be walking the land with the Town Forester to map some trails as well as look for harvestable timber. Ms. Drew asked about the accessibility to the Town Forest. Ms. Blaise stated four-wheel drive is definitely needed and after the rains, it is much worse. She stated it is the hope that the timber harvesting will help cover costs of repairing the road.

Ms. Blaise stated Deer Meadow Pond has an association that is being re-established so they can be the payee for the grant for milfoil treatment; it will be formalized at the next meeting.

Zoning Compliance

Mr. Guth stated Scott Lacroix resigned last month so he is now the Zoning Compliance Officer. He stated he is currently working on several complex complaints on Dover Road as well as a complaint about the bark mulch set up on Black Hall Road. Mr. Guth stated there are a lot of permits coming in for ADUs, porches, decks, driveways, etc.

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Mr. Horner stated it's been a slow year so far; there have been four cases with two still open. He stated one case was for a solar farm and noted there is nothing in the Ordinance in regard to this use.

Budget Committee

Ms. LaFleur stated the next meeting for the Budget Committee is being planned for the first week of June, the location is still to be determined. Ms. Gilpatrick noted there is a list available at the for meeting spaces, noting some spaces have a limit on the number of people permitted.

Trustees of the Trust Funds

Mary Lou stated the Trustees will be meeting next week.

Emergency Management

Mr. Virgin stated he is still working on the Emergency Operations Plan; the committee for the hazard mitigation plan will begin meeting tomorrow. They are looking for members of the public to join the Committee. He stated they need a set amount of labor hours to receive in-kind matching funds, so the more people involved, the more credit they received, up to \$2500. Mr. Virgin stated the generator is due to be received in June or July. He stated he is working on checking the telephone systems to ensure they are operating properly with EOP. Mr. Virgin stated gates have been installed around the school property. Chief Yeaton stated he has concerns about access, but they haven't had a chance to follow-up with the school yet. Mr. Virgin stated they are also working with the school to tie in communication systems with the Town. He stated they are also working on getting people trained for emergency situations.

Police Department

Chief Michaels stated they average about 500 calls for dispatch per month; there have been 170 criminal offenses since January. He stated the overtime line is running low but that was expected with the vacancies. Chief Michaels outlined the condition of the police cruisers; he stated the 2006 cruiser will be going to auction next month. He stated they are actively advertising and recruiting candidates to fill the vacancies; three candidates are currently going through the background and testing processes. They are averaging three to four calls per week to the school; there are kids without food, and regular calls to DCYF.

Chief Michaels stated Drug Take Back Day was on April 22 and they collected 100 pounds of prescription drugs. They have seatbelt patrols planned for the upcoming months and explained they are also dealing with drugs on a daily basis.

Mr. Guth asked if Chief Michaels believes his officers are receiving the proper training and support they need. Chief Michaels confirmed they are handling the work well.

Planning Board

Mr. McKechnie stated the Planning Board has been doing well; he stated one of their goals on the Board has to simplify and make the process easier for residents; he stated the Board is starting to work on projects that have been put off for a few years. Mr. McKechnie stated the Planning Board and Zoning Board are working well together to make things easier for residents.

Ms. Gilpatrick stated the Planning Board is also working to update the site plan regulations; a public hearing will be held in June. She suggested Department Heads also keep in mind their portion of the CIP in preparation for the budget process later in the year. Ms. Wyosocki asked about the proposed warrant articles which were pulled. Ms. Gilpatrick stated different board members are working on those.

Town Maintenance

Mr. McKechnie stated he would like to have all maintenance requests sent by email; he stated there was also discussion with the Select Board about doing an annual walk-thru of all the town buildings. This would be beneficial for preventative maintenance and budgeting for projects as well.

Memorial Day Planning

Ms. Drew stated there will be a Memorial Day celebration on Monday, May 29, at a 10:00AM at the Epsom Bible Church.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:53PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Riel

Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary