

**Town of Epsom  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes  
June 12, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

Cheryl Gilpatrick, Chair  
Virginia Drew, Vice Chair  
Meadow Wysocki

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

**Call to Order**

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

Staff Present: Jerrica Vansylyvong-Bizier, Finance Administrator; Andrea Novotney, Administrative Assistant to the Board; Robin Sweeney-Blaise, Conservation Commission Chair; and Stewart Yeaton, Fire Chief

Others Present: Deb Sargent, Robert Topik, and Len Gilman

Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Review and Accept or Amend the Agenda**

Ms. Novotney added two property tax payment plans and the Acceptance or Rejection of Terrorism Insurance Coverage forms for review. Ms. Wysocki added a meeting with Chief Yeaton at 7:00 PM to introduce a potential hire.

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

**Scheduled Appointments**

**Robert Topik**

Mr. Topik inquired how legal counsel invoices the Town. Ms. Gilpatrick explained the process as described by Ms. Novotney and gave him a copy of that and provided Mr. Topik with a copy of the Correspondence with Town Counsel Policy. Mr. Topik asked about receiving copies of the invoices and Ms. Gilpatrick stated those can be provided if requested. Mr. Topik asked about his two additional Right-to-Know requests and Ms. Gilpatrick stated he will be receiving those responses in writing. Ms. Gilpatrick discussed Mr. Topik's visits to the Town Office and explained that due to time constraints the Office Assistant has been instructed to ask for his requests in writing, if deemed necessary.

**Conservation Commission Chair**

Ms. Wysocki discussed her concerns about the Board's reaction to the Town Forest Camping ordinance presented by the Conservation Commission and stated she felt there had been a miscommunication concerning it being a draft versus final ordinance. Ms. Wysocki noted that the three campsites have been in existence for 20-30 years, with one being a Scout campsite, and all three having established burn sites.

Ms. Sweeney-Blaise, Conservation Commission Chair, noted for the Board that the Town Forrester report from 1997 does address the Scout site and rotating between the other sites, which may explain why there are three sites. Ms. Sweeney-Blaise informed the Board she had been in contact with the previous Chair who stated the Commission did have an unofficial camping policy and she noted she has been recently contacted by a scouting group about camping. Ms. Sweeney-Blaise stated that the Commission does understand they must come to the Board for approval of any ordinance and that there is a struggle as to what to do with this issue.

Ms. Drew stated she felt that allowing camping in the Town Forrest would cause a liability issue. Ms. Gilpatrick noted she believed this draft ordinance was supposed to address not allowing camping and asked Ms. Sweeney-Blaise if she knew who constructed these campsites initially. Ms. Sweeney-Blaise stated she believed it was the Scouts and not the Town. Ms. Novotney provided the Board with the concerns from the Town's insurance agent and the questions raised by the insurance underwriters.

The Board and Ms. Sweeney-Blaise discussed a no camping in the Town Forest Ordinance with a possible waiver for groups like the Scouts, on an as needed basis. Ms. Sweeney-Blaise will take this back to the Commission to work on a draft that will address the discussed signage and waiver language.

Mr. Gilman asked about future purchase of more land for the Town Forest and stated his concern for additional restrictions put on that land. Ms. Wysocki and Ms. Sweeney-Blaise stated they are not aware of any plan for a new purchase at this time.

#### **Meetinghouse Bathroom Bids**

- McKechnie's Property Service - \$38,250.00
- MRP Construction & Restoration LLC - \$79,347.83

Ms. Drew noted that Mr. Driesbach talked with both to provide information to help assist in the bid preparation. Ms. Wysocki asked for the Meetinghouse Historic Trust fund balance and Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier stated the last figure she had was \$32,519.48. Ms. Drew discussed the need to continue fundraising and the concern of costs going up. The Board discussed the budget constraints and discussing with the contractor that the scope of work may have to be limited.

**Motion by:** Ms. Drew to accept McKechnies's Property Service bid in the amount of \$38,250.00. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0

#### **Chief Yeaton**

Chief Yeaton presented new hire candidate David Jude and informed the Board of Mr. Jude's credentials and provided the Board with details on what the new hire process would look like. Mr. Jude introduced himself to the Board and the Board welcomed Mr. Jude to the Town.

**Motion by:** Ms. Drew to hire David Jude as a Firefighter and Advanced EMT effective 6/26/2023. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0

#### **Black Hall Rd**

Ms. Gilpatrick informed the Board the Town will have until 6/23/23 to try and remedy the issue with the title insurance company. The title company will not issue title insurance without a release deed despite Town counsel stating it is not necessary. The Town's realtor has worked with Ms. Gilpatrick to attempt to locate the former property owner and the Board requested that Ms. Novotney also search for any contact information.

#### **Finance Administrator's Report**

Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier presented the Board with an updated vacation / use of earned time form and the Board approved the use of the new form. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier provided the Board with updated expenditures to date and noted that the reimbursements from the Supervisors of the Checklist have been received. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier informed the Board that the new cleaning company had started and their contact information had been provided to the Police, Fire, and Library for scheduling. She also informed the Board of an issue with the Toshiba invoicing but that she is working with the Toshiba representative to have it corrected. The additional locks and keys for the dumpster have been received. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier requested the Board's approval to hang a dropbox for inside the Town office to be used for tax payments and the Board agreed. Ms. Wysocki inquired about the ARPA reporting and Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier stated it has been done.

#### **Administrative Assistant's Report**

Ms. Novotney informed the Board that she had reached out to those who had outstanding appointment and oath of office paperwork and that she had updated her calendar with the appointee renewal dates. Ms. Novotney stated she had spoken to Mr. O'Brien who provided a mowing quote of \$90 per week. The Board agreed to this price but stated at this time the mowing should be done every other week. Ms. Novotney noted she is looking at what the Town Office will need to do administratively for the short-term rentals and that she is working with the Office Assistant on expanding the public hearing postings on the Town website. Ms. Novotney informed the Board that she had reached out to Civic Plus and was informed that the Drupal 9 version will be released later this year. Ms. Novotney inquired if the Board wished to have a presentation done by Community Power and the Board declined. Ms. Novotney informed the Board she has continued to contact Breezeline concerning internet at the Meetinghouse and that she has an upcoming appointment with Teletechniques to correct the employee phone directory and that going forward staff will be able to do this themselves. She also informed the Board that she has been working with the Chief and Lieutenant concerning updating the Police emails. Ms. Novotney requested she be made an administrator again on the Town Facebook account. She also noted that she had posted the Economic Development Charter to the website, created the Hazard Mitigation Committee page, and was compiling a list of IT vendors for future review and was waiting on a quote from K&K Landscaping concerning the crushed stone.

**Motion by:** Ms. Drew to appoint Paula Smith as Deputy Treasurer through 3/31/2024. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0

#### **Discussion**

##### **Citizen Year of the Year**

Ms. Novotney explained the Citizen of the Year nomination form she had previously created. The Board approved the use of the nomination form with edits.

### **Lighting at the Circle**

Ms. Drew noted for the Board her concerns about the lack of lighting at the circle and the response from NHDOT referencing the tentatively scheduled 2024 construction. Ms. Drew informed the Board she had been asked by Senator Pearl if the Board was satisfied with the response received by NHDOT. It was the consensus of the Board that Ms. Drew continue to address the issue.

### **Insurance Renewal**

It was the consensus of the Board to decline the terrorism insurance coverages and have Ms. Novotney submit the rejection form to the Town's insurance agent. The Board reviewed the policy premiums with Ms. Novotney and requested that she contact the insurance agent with a question concerning pricing and drone coverage.

### **Renovation Update**

Ms. Drew informed the Board that the lighting for the grounds is on backorder and requested any items that should be included on the final punchlist. Ms. Drew stated that she did a walkthrough with Laura Black and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) still needs to be written concerning the building's heating system. Ms. Novotney was instructed to begin the draft MOU. Ms. Drew noted that Ms. Black would like the proposed shingles for the Old Library roof project to be placed on that roof and a photo taken and sent to her.

### **Resume Policy Review**

Ms. Novotney requested that the Board repeal the Admittance to Town Office Interior Policy and Town Office Key Distribution Policy and that the Town Office Key and Passcode Policy be reformatted to be consistent with the structure of the other Town policies, and the Board agreed.

**Motion by:** Ms. Drew to repeal the Admittance to Town Office Interior Policy and Town Office Key Distribution Policy. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Ms. Novotney suggested the Select Board Agenda policy, Credit Card policy, and Purchasing Policy to be the next policies the Board reviews. Ms. Vanslyvong-Bizier presented a draft Fund Balance Policy for review as well. The Board will provide Ms. Novotney with their policy books for organization.

### **Signature / Approval Items**

- Hazard Mitigation Committee appointments for signature as these were approved at a previous meeting.
- Property Tax Payment Plans

**Motion by:** Ms. Drew to approve the property tax payment plans as structured by the Tax Collector.

**Second by:** **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

- Yield Taxes Assessed R13-37 and U16-11A
- Raffle Request

**Motion by:** Ms. Drew to approve the raffle request submitted by Profile Auto League. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

## **Public Comment**

### **Robert Topik**

Mr. Topik stated his request for the notes from the creation of tonight's meeting minutes. The Board stated that a request cannot be made before the notes exist but a request can be made after they are created. The Board explained that Ms. Novotney types an initial draft of the minutes while the meeting is taking place. Mr. Topik will request a copy of the initial draft the following day.

### **Deb Sargent**

Ms. Sargent asked the Board how much the Town is saving not paying on rent. Ms. Drew noted the previous rent amount and the months since moving out of the former location and explained that the Town had previously been paying heat and electric at both buildings as well as rent. Ms. Sargent asked what the differences in utility costs were now, the Board explained they did not have that information currently and will be looking at that information over a longer period of time.

### **Len Gilman**

Mr. Gilman asked if they had looked into in-floor heating for the Meetinghouse and the Board explained it was considered but determined to not be feasible.

## **Select Board Reports**

### **Ms. Wysocki**

#### **Emergency Management:**

The generator grant award has been received and the Emergency Management Director has taken care of the filing that needed to be done.

#### **Hazard Mitigation Committee:**

The Committee will have its first meeting this Wednesday at the Fire Department with a Zoom option. This has been posted to the Town website, Facebook, and around Town.

#### **Joint Loss Safety Management Committee:**

The Committee will be meeting before the Hazard Mitigation Committee to review the updated Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) before it is submitted to the Board for acceptance. The Board thanked Ms. Gilpatrick for her 35+ hours working on the EOP.

#### **Welfare:**

The Welfare Director is waiting for internet service to be set up in her office.

#### **Health Officer:**

Ms. Wysocki will reach out to Mr. Sylvia about the yearly Health Department meeting.

### **Ms. Drew**

#### **BCEP:**

The next meeting will be 6/29/2023.

**Zoning Board of Adjustment:**

The Board has a public hearing coming up on 6/21/2023 and will likely have another one scheduled shortly after that.

**Zoning Compliance Officer:**

The ZCO is currently working on the Junkyard permit inspections. Ms. Rheaume did the recent NHMA Effective Code Enforcement webinar; the link is available if any other staff members would like to view it.

**Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee:**

The OMRC met on 6/3/23 to work on fundraising and are looking to do another Ring the Bell fundraiser. They will also be working on an inventory of items stored in the building. The final stained glass window is almost complete.

**Library:**

Ms. Drew had a meeting with the Library Trustees last Wednesday and discussed the drainage issue at the Library. A memorandum of understanding will need to be drafted concerning the Old Library and there will need to be discussion concerning items the Library is storing at the Old Library.

**Food Pantry:**

The regular manager of the pantry has returned.

**Park Commission:**

Ms. Drew noted she attended the recent Park Commission meeting on behalf of Ms. Gilpatrick and they had a reforestation presentation, the dumpster has been delivered, and the tick treatment done.

**Police Department:**

Calls to the Epsom Central School are up; they are having an issue with former students returning to the school after hours. Chief Michael has noted that overall the call volume is on the rise. They continue to have one new candidate on track to attend the academy and one moving through the background process. Ms. Drew also noted they had a recent report the department investigated of someone selling miscellaneous items out of their car at Short Falls.

**Ms. Gilpatrick****Highway:**

The Highway department is currently working on ditching.

**Planning Board:**

The Board has an upcoming Public Hearing.

**Park Commission:**

The Commission is receiving many Webster Park reservations and the reservation calendar on the website is being used again.

**Town Clerk / Tax Collector:**

Ms. Searbo notes that her office has registered over 800 dogs and have about 400 left, they will be sending out reminders in about a week, before the civil forfeitures are issued. Ms. Searbo recently attended a voter registration at Pembroke Academy and got 6 new voters registered; the event got a total of 20 new voters registered. They plan on holding another event in the fall and she plans on attending. Ms. Searbo will be preparing a delinquent property tax list for the Board's next meeting.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion by:** Ms. Drew to approve the May 30, 2023 minutes, as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki.

**Motion passed unanimously: 3-0**

**Adjournment**

With no additional business to come before the Board at this time,

**Motion by:** Motion by Ms. Drew to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0**

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrea Novotney  
Administrative Assistant

