

**Town of Epsom
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
August 7, 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; Megan Rheume, Office Assistant; Stewart Yeaton, Fire Department Chief.

Others Present: Deb Sargent and Rob Topik

Ms. Wysocki led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review and Accept or Amend the Agenda

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

Finance Administrator's Report

The Board and Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier reviewed the Road Agent's vacation extension request.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the vacation extension requested submitted by the Road Agent. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier noted for the Board she had created the additional Meetinghouse lower level door codes for the Food Pantry volunteers and that the handicap door opener and the light above the Office Assistant's desk have not yet been repaired. Ms. Drew will contact Milestone concerning these two issues and the AC in the Meetinghouse lower level. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier informed the Board about the cost increase on the First Light bill and stated she had contacted Teletechniques about the possibility of changing to Consolidated Communications. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier inquired about the invoice for the Citizen of the Year plaque but the Board did not believe Ms. Riel had picked it up yet. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier informed the Board how the print tracking on the Toshiba printer is working. It was the consensus of the Board to track the usage and review at the end of the year. Ms. Drew asked if it would be possible to set up a Venmo account for accepting donations, as the OMRC is currently soliciting for donations. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier stated she would research this and report back to the Board.

Administrative Assistant's Report

Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier presented the Administrative Assistant report on behalf of Ms. Novotney. She noted that the Webster Park concession stand claim submitted in April was submitted without the cost of

the tree removal and Ms. Novotney is working to address this with the insurance company. They are both continuing to work on the Financial Policies. Ms. Novotney has set up and done the transfer for the Road Agent's new phone. She has updated the Veterans' Tax Credit Qualifications and Criteria document and had the Town Assessor review it and went over the changes with the Office Assistant. The updated document has been uploaded to the website and handout copies made for the office. She has participated in the NHMA Legislative wrap-up webinar and noted for the Board that House Bill 321 will address the review of sealed minutes. Ms. Novotney has put out the RFP for the IT Managed Services and she has been answering follow-up questions concerning the RFP and has three meetings with IT vendors scheduled. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier provided the Board with a handout from the Northwood Lake Watershed Association concerning their proposal to create a Watershed Management Plan. Ms. Novotney continues to update the Town Hall renovation project documents and has them in a binder as well as downloaded. Ms. Novotney also requested that the Board remind the Boards, Committees, and Commissions they are liaison to that agendas need to be submitted to the office in a timely fashion so the meetings can be posted 24 hours in advance, as required by 91-A.

Discussion

Old Library Roof

Ms. Drew noted for the Board that further damage was discovered while the roof repair was being done and the Board will need to determine where this additional cost will be paid from. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier will contact the Trustees of the Trust Funds to get the balance of the Historic Town Owned Buildings Trust Fund.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the additional cost of the Old Library roof repair. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Fire Department Payroll

Chief Yeaton provided the Board with an update on the number of, and nature of, the calls they have been receiving. The Chief informed the Board they would like to adjust when the payroll period starts to 7AM on Saturday morning, instead of midnight, to better match their schedule. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier noted for the Board that she has researched this change with the Federal Department of Labor and the NH State Department of Labor and this will need to be a written policy signed by the Board and then included in a future update to the Employee Handbook.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to adopt the new hourly structure for the Fire Department employees to start at 7AM on Saturday and to end after the following two-week period at 6:59AM on Saturday. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Tax Deeded Property Abutter Sale Draft Letter

Ms. Gilpatrick noted it should be researched if any of the abutting properties have had a survey done, as the property in question was taken by Tax Collector's Deed after it was determined via survey to not be part of an existing parcel. The Board discussed the draft letter and their edits and it was the consensus of the Board to have Counsel review the final draft when it is complete. Ms. Gilpatrick to continue research on this property with Ms. Novotney and Ms. Rheume.

Creation of a Tricentennial Celebration Committee

Ms. Drew noted that 2027 will be Epsom's 300th anniversary. The Board discussed the creation of this proposed Committee and possible commemorative items. It was the consensus of the Board to proceed with the creation of this Committee and that one Select Board member would sit on the Committee.

Creation of a Historic Commission

Ms. Drew noted for the Board that during her L-CHIP training she discovered that if the Town had a Historic Commission it would be beneficial when attempting to acquire grants. Ms. Drew noted that the creation of a Historic or Heritage Commission would have to be done via a Warrant Article. The Board and Ms. Rheame discussed the difference between a Historic Commission and a Historic District Commission. The Board discussed developing a group that would consist of representatives from various Boards and interested citizens to meet and discuss this topic.

Park Commission Purchasing / Credit Card

Ms. Gilpatrick noted for the Board that the former Park Commission Chair stated he previously had a card that he could take to Home Depot that would affirm that he represents the Town. Ms. Gilpatrick noted the Park Commission's need to purchase repair and maintenance items during nights and weekends when the Town Office is closed and their card is not available. Ms. Vansylvong-Bizier noted for the Board her concerns in regard to a volunteer being given a Town credit card. The Board and Ms. Vansylvong-Bizier discussed issuing a credit card to the Chair of the Park Commission and updating the Credit Card Policy. It was the consensus of the Board to have a Home Depot card issued to the Chair of the Park Commission with a limit of \$1,000.

Signature / Approval Items

- MS-535

Motion by: Ms. Drew to sign the MS-535 to close out 2022. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

- Certification of Yield Taxes Assessed R15-17 – signed
- End of Probation Letter – signed
- Employment Contract – The Board reviewed and discussed the Employment Contract and will follow up with Chief Michael concerning their edits before signing the contract.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to enter into an agreement with the candidate brought forward by the Police Chief as a probationary patrol officer at the rate of \$18 per hour working 8-16 hours per week until the next physical ability test to be held on December 2023. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

- Hazard Mitigation Committee Appointment

Motion by: Ms. Wysocki to appoint Miriam Cahill-Yeaton to the Hazard Mitigation Committee until completion of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. **Second by:** Ms. Drew. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

- Raffle Permission Request for Ruff Diamond Dogs

Motion by: Ms. Wysocki to approve the Raffle Request for New England Working Dogs. **Second by:** Ms. Drew. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

- Vendor Cancellation Letter – signed by the Chair
- Payment Agreement – signed as the motion was made at previous meeting
- Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) - signed

Motion by: Ms. Drew to adopt the Emergency Management Operations Plan effective June 1, 2023.

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

FYI / Correspondence

- Mitchell Municipal Group Correspondence – Notification of Walter Mitchell's retirement.

Public Comment

Deb Sargent

Ms. Sargent asked why the Veterans' Tax Credit has to now be voted on every year. Ms. Gilpatrick explained it does not have to be voted on every year and it was voted on because it needed to be readopted due to legislative changes. Ms. Sargent asked if any Board members had been through Loudon center and seen the veterans' pictures displayed. Ms. Drew noted that the Town had been approached about this but the person never appeared before the Board. Ms. Sargent noted her concerns about the Epsom Old Home Weekend signs at the traffic circle being positioned so they are not easy to read. Ms. Drew noted that this is done by a private group and they are separate from the Town.

Rob Topik

Mr. Topik asked when the Police Station will be open again for walk-in inquires. Ms. Drew informed Mr. Topik that the Police Department Administrative Assistant is on vacation and due to staffing shortages there is no staff available to work in the front office. Mr. Topik stated that the Town Office had received an inquiry from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms concerning a Federal Firearms License inquiry and asked if any Select Board member received an inquiry from the BATF. The Board noted that they had not but Ms. Drew was aware of it because she is the Board liaison to the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Town Office and had been informed by the Office Assistant.

Select Board Reports

Ms. Wysocki

Hazard Mitigation Committee:

The Committee continues to work on the updates to the Hazard Mitigation Plan, they are slightly behind schedule but feel confident they will catch up and they have had amendment participation at the meetings.

Conservation Commission:

The Commission will be meeting on the 17th and are waiting for an update from the Town Forrester on the Timber Cut.

Economic Development Committee:

The Committee is working on the Economic Revitalization Zones which are due for renewal in 2024 and they are researching what will need to be done for the renewal. The Committee has reached out to the Historic Association to see if they are aware of any Town slogans. They discussed Town sign ideas. The Committee will be creating a YouTube account for posting videos they will be able to show to the public.

The Committee has also been discussing inviting State Representatives and other government officials to future meetings as well as representatives from local businesses.

Emergency Management:

The updated Emergency Operations Plan has been completed and has been submitted for approval. Ms. Wysocki thanked Ms. Gilpatrick for her considerable work on this project.

Ms. Drew

Zoning Compliance Officer:

The ZCO has been working on several ongoing issues with the Zoning Board of Adjustment. The ZCO has noted that he has been very busy and some of the permits have required more research and this has led to him putting in more hours than typical. Ms. Gilpatrick requested that Ms. Drew discuss a zoning concerning for a property on Black Hall Road with the ZCO. Ms. Wysocki suggested having the ZCO come to a future Board meeting to discuss zoning issues and concerns and Ms. Drew said she will discuss this with the ZCO.

Zoning Board of Adjustment:

The ZBA has received a Right-to-Know request and they are working on that with the assistance of legal counsel. The ZBA voted at their August 2nd meeting to grant a rehearing request and they have an additional meeting on August 16th regarding another rehearing request. Ms. Drew noted that the ZBA is currently working on some complicated issues and she is impressed with the Chair and Vice Chair's diligence in working on these matters.

Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee:

The OMRC will be working on acquiring donations for the remainder of the bathroom installations as well as hosting a barbeque on Friday evening during Old Home Weekend. Ms. Drew brought up for discussion the OMRC also creating a YouTube account and it was the consensus of the Board that it would be beneficial to do so.

BCEP:

The BCEP met last week and during the meeting Ms. Drew questioned BCEP's check signing process. Their current process is the Treasurer is the only signer of the checks, which are paid monthly, and the Selectman are given documentation of the bills that were paid. Ms. Drew noted that most municipalities and organizations have a two-signature requirement and typically review the bills to be paid prior to the checks going out. This concern will be discussed at the next BCEP meeting.

Police Department:

Officer Ebert recently handled a multi-jurisdictional investigation and multiple arrests on a Fentanyl seizure. The Patrick Lahey Bulletproof Partnership ballistic program grant is pending and they are waiting to hear if they are approved. Their third quarter grant reimbursement has been completed and they have completed the 2024 Highway Safety Grants and are waiting for those approvals. The condenser line for the Station's air conditioner is leaking again and has been serviced but the system is old and out of date and looks like it will need to be replaced. When it leaks condensation on the floor and into the evidence room it causes mold and slippery conditions.

Ms. Gilpatrick

Highway Department:

The Road Agent reports they are continuing to fix washouts now that they have the excavator back and roadside mowing is in process.

Park & Recreation Commission:

The Commission has been working on several updates and repairs at the Park. The new ordinance signs have been hung up and the second set will be hung after Old Home Weekend. The new sink room has been added to the bathrooms and the stage has been refurbished. There was an ongoing issue with someone removing the caution tape that was put up after painting was done and Ms. Gilpatrick has brought this to the Police Chief's attention.

Town Clerk:

The Clerk is at her certification training this week and has noted it has been very productive, though today is only the first day. The Clerk plans on attending a two-day training this Fall. The Deputy will be on vacation next week and the Clerk will be on vacation the following week. Their office will not have a Saturday opening this month and this will be posted as an announcement.

Tax Collector:

The Tax Collector noted there are just under 200 dogs left to be registered and when she returns from training she will be drafting the civil forfeiture letters to give to the Police Department. The Tax Collector also notes that tax payments continue to come in slowly.

Black Hall Road Property:

The Release Deed has been signed by the former owner and a Bill of Interpleader does not need to be done now that the Town has the former owner's contact information. It was the consensus of the Board to have Ms. Riel contact the next highest bidder.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the July 24, 2023 minutes, as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki.

Motion approved unanimously: 3-0.

Adjournment

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

Motion by: Ms. Drew to adjourn the meeting at 9:00PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Novotney
Administrative Assistant