

**TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
October 7, 2019 AT 6:00 PM**

Hugh Curley

Approved: **Cheryl / Virginia**
Vote: 2 – 0 in favor.

Virginia Drew
Cheryl Gilpatrick

Staff Present: Nancy Wheeler, Dawn Calley-Murdough, Alison Parodi, Dawn Blackwell, Stewart Yeaton

Other Attendees: Joni Kitson, Meadow Wysocki, Len Gilman, Betsy Bosiak

Virginia called the meeting to order at 6 pm and asked Hugh to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Virginia reviewed the agenda and stated the board will need a non-public with Chief Yeaton, an abatement and intent to cut to assessing documents have been added for signatures, a list of open positions from Dawn Blackwell for the 2020 town elections has been provided, and the town Welcome Packet mailed out by Donna Randall. The board will move up the discussion regarding the Conservation Commission Moose Plate grant to the beginning of the meeting.

Motion by: Cheryl to accept the agenda as amended. **Second by:** Hugh. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

McClary Cemetery Moose Plate Grant: Nancy reviewed the process the grant provider needs for the town to accept the grant. Nancy stated the town must sign the certificate for municipalities, which is different than other grants.

Motion by: Cheryl resolved that the Town of Epsom shall enter into a contract with the State of New Hampshire, acting by and through the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources providing for the performance by the Town of Epsom of certain services as documented within the foregoing grant application and that the official listed, Board of Selectmen Chair Virginia J. Drew, on behalf of Epsom, is authorized and directed to enter into the said grant agreement with the State of New Hampshire, and that they are to take any and all such actions that may be deemed necessary, desirable or appropriate in order to execute, seal, acknowledge and deliver any and all documents, agreements and other instruments on behalf of the Town of Epsom in order to accomplish the same. **Second by:** Hugh. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Motion by: Cheryl to resolve that the signature of the above authorized party or parties of this Municipality, when affixed to any instrument of document described in, or contemplated by, these resolutions, shall be conclusive evidence of the authority of Virginia J. Drew to bind this Municipality. **Second by:** Hugh. **Vote:** 3 - 0 in favor.

Virginia thanked Dawn B. for providing the list of upcoming positions that will be on the ballot in March 2020.

Hugh thanked Alison for applying for the grant and getting it for the town.

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Nancy stated this is not a match grant, but the town is receiving the full amount to pay for the repairs to the McClary Cemetery fence. Alison stated she formally accepted a contractor from the list of approved contractors recommended by the state.

Alison provided the board with information about the 40 acre parcel abutting the Town Forest that is up for sale and being offered to the Conservation Commission. Alison asked the board to use money from the capital reserve fund to purchase this property totaling approximately \$40,000.00. The board and Alison agreed to a meeting on November 4th.

Appointments: None

Finance Report: Nancy stated she has a tentative schedule for most department heads for the budget presentation meetings. The first meeting will be Tuesday, October 15 at 5:30 pm and she will email the schedules to the board with the updated budget documents, including applicable department head budget narrative.

Rick will complete the needed quarterly grant paperwork for the upgrade to the phone system.

Nancy stated she received a phone call from Walter Mitchell regarding the Eversource valuation appeals from 2014/2015/2016 and a proposed settlement offer the board received in January. He is looking to finalize all information by the end of the week and receive final settlement agreement from the Selectmen.

A/P includes the registrations and servicing of town vehicles.

Virginia asked Nancy to also inform the Budget Committee Chair Marylou about the budget presentations; Nancy agreed.

Hugh asked about the Highway Department Subway bill, which covers the period from June to September stating it seems too long a period to wait for payment. Nancy would ask Scott to reach out to the owner to try and get any year end bills before the end of the year. Hugh stated he was not concerned about the amount of the bill, but the delay in getting the bill to the town.

Nancy left the meeting to work on the Eversource settlement calculations, which would be reviewed later in the meeting.

Signature Items: Virginia signed the HealthTrust authorization form for Nancy to remain as the contact person.

Motion by: Cheryl to accept the donation of \$200.00 to the Old Meetinghouse Historic Trust Fund. **Second by:** Hugh. **Vote:** 3 - 0 in favor.

The board signed the appointment letter for the new police officer, Jonathan Ebert, and the letter of agreement with Griggs Enterprises for the removal of the 2 B Street property. Hugh clarified he requested a single change to the letter to allow for BCEP to direct the Griggs where the debris should be sent.

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Fire Department Information on upcoming Request for Bid on building renovations:

Stewart reviewed the process he took to receive the original quotes that were used to establish the warrant article and stated he has had a hard time finding other contractors. Stewart stated the window and siding material costs were \$3,571.00, and the cost for the actual renovation work to remove the deck and replace and repair the front of the building was \$28,600.00. The cost of the carpets was \$9,810.00. It was stated the bids were received in November 2018 timeframe and he has some funds available in his building maintenance account of the operating budget, if an additional amount is needed beyond the warrant article.

Cheryl asked if the bid would be honored given the time since it was provided. Stewart stated the contractor agreed to keep the price the same, but there is some concern about any additional construction that might be needed once the demolition begins.

Cheryl asked if the board needs to offer approval for the received bids. Virginia stated approval has already been given and the board approved Stewart to move forward with trying to get the work done.

Meadow asked how long the project would take and reminded the Chief about Thanksgiving. Stewart stated he expected about two weeks to complete the renovations.

Non-Public Session: 6:41 pm Motion by: Cheryl to enter into Non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c). **Second by:** Hugh.

Roll call vote: Virginia – Aye, Cheryl – Aye, Hugh – Aye.

6:55 pm Motion by: by Cheryl to exit non-public session and to seal the non-public minutes. **Second by:** Hugh. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

The board made no decisions and would seal the minutes.

Assessing Signatures

Motion: by Hugh to accept the Land Use Change Tax for Map U10 Lot 40, Map U10 Lot 41-1, and Map U10 Lot 41-2. **Second:** by Cheryl. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Motion: by Hugh to abate \$98.73 for Map U08 Lot 105 A-3. **Second:** by Cheryl. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Motion: by Hugh to approve the Intent to Cut for Map U13 Lot 36. **Second:** by Cheryl. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Non-public Minute Review: After discussion the board decided each board member would review the non-public minutes on their own time for a recommendation. Dawn would prepare a list of non-public minute review for the board to identify their decision on whether or not they will remain sealed. The board could complete additional review as a group, if needed.

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Non-Public Session: 7:06 pm Motion by: Cheryl to enter into Non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (1). **Second by:** Hugh.

Roll call vote: Virginia – Aye, Cheryl – Aye, Hugh – Aye.

7:42 pm Motion by: Cheryl to exit non-public session and to seal the non-public minutes.

Second by: Hugh. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Virginia stated decisions were made and the minutes were sealed.

Key Policy Review: Virginia stated there have been suggestions to consider changes to the key policy and who should or could have keys, specifically to the meeting room. The Selectmen did not want to expand who has keys to the main office. The policy was updated with minor edits based on changes of town office positions and would include providing a key to the meeting room to board/committee secretaries and to the Board of Selectmen.

Budget Prep/BOS Goals: The board determined the purchase order deadline would be November 25th and a special board meeting for the same day was agreed upon.

Nancy would provide the board with new budget worksheets on Tuesday, October 8th.

Discussion took place about salary changes for town employees, in particular for police and fire.

Virginia expressed concern that town employees did not receive raises in 2019 because of the default budget, and is concerned about retaining staff for police and fire.

Hugh expressed concern that all town salaries need to be increased, but it will be hard in 2020 because there is an extra payroll. Some work took place in the past for individual positions, but with upcoming retirements additional changes should probably be considered for hiring of new staff members to promote hiring qualified staff. Hugh stated the board will also need to consider the previously requested increase to the per diem pay for the Fire Department, which wasn't approved with the passing of the default.

It was stated in the past the board has considered a specific dollar amount for a raise, such as \$0.50 per hour, but has also provided a raise based on a percent increase.

Nancy stated across the board most employees have requested salary increases for 2020. The library staff received salary increases in 2019 because the Library Trustees control the library budget. Nancy would distribute the current staff pay rates to the board, along with the updated matrix in the wage study.

Cheryl expressed concern about utilizing a single percentage for all employees, as it could create disparity between departments; town staff versus police or fire. Virginia stated a dollar amount raise is typically received more positively.

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The board agreed there should be consideration to the Fire and Police Departments because of the staffing issues based on competitive salaries. The board also agreed the 2020 budget will be challenging.

Cheryl asked to determine which employees received raises and when, over the past five years. It appears that several elected officials are asking for raises in 2020; the answer was stated there are four elections in 2020 and may be part of the reason for the increase.

The board expressed concerns about the voters choosing to vote down the proposed budget for a second year and the potential damage a default budget could do to departments.

Virginia stated she would be presenting the budget to the Budget Committee on November 12.

Len asked the board to consider a plan for replacement of town vehicles. It was stated the CIP is used to help fund reserve funds for replacement of vehicles, but it can be amended. Discussion took place about the process and plan that is used as a timeline for replacing town vehicles. Department heads would be asked to provide a list of all their town vehicles and their life span, with estimated age of replacement.

Virginia asked Department Heads to also bring forward any ideas they think they might want for warrant articles. An initial request was already made, but the board would like to know what they might be considering.

The board agreed to meet on October 28th to specifically review the budget.

Review/Accept Job Descriptions of Administrative Assistant, Office Assistant, and Finance Director: Virginia stated the October 1st staff meeting was productive.

Cheryl asked to include additional wording to the Office Assistant that the position is responsible for address changes and should include some back up duties as well from the Administrative Assistant position, such as agenda prep. The negotiation of office contracts would be completed by the Administrative Assistant but all contracts would be approved and signed by the Board of Selectmen.

Dawn noted additional changes she omitted from one position, but did not add to the other. Consideration was given about what duties the Office Assistant could complete from the Administrative Assistant position if Dawn happens to be out of the office.

Hugh asked about checking emails and voicemail and a review of who receives which emails took place. Office staff would make sure that all emails and voicemails would be answered, but it would not be listed on a job description.

Motion: by Hugh to approve the Finance Administrator job position description as changed.

Second: by Cheryl. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

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Motion: by Cheryl to approve the Administrative Assistant job position description as changed.

Second: by Hugh. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Dawn would update the Office Assistant job description for final board review and acceptance at their next meeting. It was stated Donna should also review the changes.

Discussion took place about the office previously having three full time positions, but now has two with a part-time, and it is difficult for the part-time position to complete all the potential back up duties that may be required. Discussion also took place about the Planning and Zoning needs the town might need with other retirements and other office needs.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by: Cheryl to approve the September 23, 2019 5:30 pm public minutes as amended.

Second by: Hugh. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Motion by: Cheryl to approve the September 23, 2019 6:00 pm public minutes as amended.

Second by: Hugh. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Motion by: Cheryl to approve the October 1, 2019 public minutes as amended. **Second by:** Hugh. **Vote:** 2 in favor. Hugh abstained.

Motion by: Hugh to approve the September 23, 2019 non-public minutes. **Second by:** Virginia. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Correspondence – FYI: Dawn reviewed the FYI documents, which included the county tax bill amount and the annual report, the town welcome packet, and a notice on an upcoming bankruptcy sale.

Selectmen Reports:

Cheryl: Scott contacted Morton Salt and is trying to negotiate a lower price for salt at the Highway Department, as their product is typically superior. Pike started graveling on New Orchard, when done FEMA can inspect, with paving to follow. There is some expectation that the Fall 2019 road grading will cost less with than the grading work in Spring 2019, as additional work will be completed by Scott

The Planning Board continues to work on completing the Gauthier Drive Maintenance Bond and should be able to have the Selectmen make a decision to accept the road.

Hugh: He missed the BCEP meeting; however they will also have a challenging budget season. Information was received that the composting hills at BCEP have been found free of contaminants and the materials are available to participating towns to use on town roads and properties.

Hugh stated he received a call from Tony Soltani that the town could purchase his building at the Ronald Reagan Plaza for office space. Hugh asked if he should gather additional information

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from Tony or ask that Tony submit additional information about what he is offering. Virginia asked that he submit a proposal, as the board will need to consider all the available options. Joni recommended having a life safety check of the building completed by the Fire Department to make sure it is safe.

Virginia: The Police Department has hired a new officer. The Zoning Board met last week, approved one case, and continued another. The Old Meetinghouse Committee has been working hard on fundraising to try and find grants that offer matching funds in order to complete repairs.

Public Comments:

Rob asked if the town could utilize rat traps versus poison. The board would consider other alternatives.

Other Business: None

Adjourn the Meeting

10:01 PM Motion by: Cheryl to adjourn the meeting. **Second by:** Hugh. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Calley-Murdough