

**Town of Epsom
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
September 18, 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 Select Board; Kaitlin Camidge, Library Director; Bob McKechnie, Planning Board Vice Chair; Ted Virgin, Emergency Management Director; Brian Michael, Police Chief; Stewart Year, Fire Chief; Ryan Kehoe, Zoning Board of Adjustment Vice Chair; Robyn Sweeney-Blaise, Conservation Commission Chair; Patricia Hickey, Welfare Administrator; Scott Elliott, Road Agent; Vincent Pagano, Economic Development Committee Chair; Glenn Horner, Zoning Board of Adjustment Chair; Chad Decker, Conservation Commission Vice Chair; Justin Guth, Zoning Compliance Officer; Marylou Lafleur, Budget Committee Chair and Trustee of the Trust Funds

Others Presents: Ron Klemarczyk, Town Forester; Brent Bachelder

Ms. Gilpatrick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review and Accept or Amend the Agenda

Ms. Novotney added a Certification of Yield Taxes Assessed for R02-2 to Signature/Approvals and corrected the 8/25/2023 minutes to the correct date of 9/5/2023. Ms. Gilpatrick added dates for budget presentations and the RFP for IT managed services to Discussion.

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

Finance Administrator

Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier provided the Board the expenditures to date report for review. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier asked if the Housing Appeals Board legal charges should be applied to the Planning Board legal line or the Select Board legal line, it was the consensus of the Board they should be applied to the Planning Board legal line. Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier noted that she and Ms. Novotney had met with representatives from FP Mailing Solutions about a new IMI compliant postage machine. The Board requested they research additional quotes before a new postage machine contract is signed.

Administrative Assistant

Ms. Novotney noted that the Fort Mountain Trail Winders snowmobile trail permission agreement is due for renewal in October and that she will be sending them a reminder letter. Ms. Novotney informed the

Board she will be sending out requests for quotes for the annual printing of the Town Report. Ms. Novotney requested the Board's approval to submit a cybersecurity grant request through the Department of Information Technology; it was the consensus of the Board to proceed. Ms. Novotney informed the Board she had contacted the Town's insurance provider and informed them the Black Hall Road property had been sold and that it should be removed from the Town's coverage.

Discussion

Conservation Commission Timber Cut Bids

Ms. Wysocki informed the Board that Conservation Commission had received two Timber Cut bids from Robert Lee and Fort Mountain Trucking. Ms. Wysocki stated that Mr. Lee was present at the start of the Timber Cut bid walkthrough but became ill and had to leave, he requested to do the same walkthrough at a later date and this request was granted by the Town Forester and he was able to bid.

The Board reviewed the bids and Ms. Wysocki stated it was the Conservation Commission's recommendation to accept Mr. Lee's bid.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to accept the Timber Cut bid from Robert Lee in the amount of \$22,540. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

IT Managed Services Proposals

The Board discussed budgeting for IT managed services and determined that the managed services would be in a general budget line with hardware and software in department specific lines.

Budget Presentations

It was the consensus of the Board to invite the Welfare Department, Zoning Compliance Department, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Park and Recreation Commission, Library, Conservation Commission, and Economic Development Committee to the 10/2/2023 meeting to present their budgets. It was the consensus of the Board to invite the Fire Department, Police Department, Highway Department, Emergency Management Department, and Town Clerk / Tax Collector / Supervisors of the Checklist to the 10/3/2023 meeting to present their budgets. Ms. Wysocki noted that at the School Department will be attending this Thursday's Budget Committee meeting and the Committee will be setting the upcoming meeting dates, Ms. Wysocki did not believe that Ms. Vanslyvong-Bizier needed to attend this meeting and the Board was in agreement.

A five minute recess was taken from 6:55 – 7:00 PM.

Scheduled Appointments

Department Heads

Conservation Commission: Ms. Sweeney-Blaise stated that the Commission has been working on the timber harvest in the Town Forest and noted that the Town Forester, Ron Klemarczyk, was in attendance to discuss. Mr. Klemarczyk informed the Board that improvements to the Class VI road will need to be done in order to do the timber harvest and the timber sale covers the cost of the road improvements. Ms. Wysocki noted she had contacted the Road Agent to discuss the proposed road improvements. Ms. Drew asked who would oversee the work and Mr. Klemarczyk stated he would be the one who would oversee it.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to give approval to the Town Forester, Ron Komarzyk, to do the proposed work on the Class VI roadway, Tarleton Road, to the Town Forest. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

Ms. Sweeney-Blaise noted that the Commission is now up to five members as they've had two new members join. The Dear Meadow Pond residents sought, and were granted from the Commission, financial assistance for milfoil treatment. This is a cost split with the Chichester Conservation Commission and NHDES. The project had been fully funded by the State for the first year.

Highway Department: Mr. Elliott noted it has been a tough summer and they are behind on regularly scheduled maintenance work because of the heavy rains. The Department has been paving swales to help with washouts in the future. Mr. Elliott plans to do a Warrant Article to lease an excavator for five years, similar to how it was done with the backhoe lease. Mr. Elliott noted that the storm damage costs are being paid out of capital reserve and FEMA funds have been sought. Mr. Elliott stated that striping will be happening in the next two weeks on River Road, New Rye Road, Swamp Road, and Mount Delight Road.

Welfare Department: Ms. Hickey noted that requests for assistance have been light this summer and stated that most applicants need help with budgeting.

Zoning Board of Adjustment: Mr. Horner stated the Board has been busy and they have a case coming up for development that will be a mix of townhouses and single-family homes. Mr. Horner noted that he had met with the Economic Development Committee and felt it was a beneficial meeting.

Trustees of Trust Funds/Budget Committee: Ms. Lafleur stated that the Trustees do have a meeting coming up tomorrow. The Budget Committee has their initial meeting coming up on Thursday and will be meeting with the School Department to review the School Report Card and will be setting upcoming meeting dates. The Department Heads can be expecting to receive the Budget Committee presentation email from her.

Economic Development Committee: Mr. Pagano stated that the Committee is working on several ideas including expanding the water service to increase business, creating a "How To" for starting a business in Epsom, updating gateway signage into Epsom, and Broadband competition. Ms. Wysocki noted that the Town has Economic Revitalization Zones and the Committee is working on how to improve the promotion of these zones.

Zoning Compliance: Mr. Guth noted he has been very busy with several cases/applications, which have been time consuming. Mr. Guth stated he would like to look at adding a legal line to the Zoning Compliance budget.

Fire Department: Chief Yeaton noted the Department has been on 848 calls year-to-date and this is set to be at an all-time high for the Department by year end. He stated they still have an open position to fill. The Chief noted that truck inspections will be starting this week and that ambulance collections are doing

well. The Chief plans to do Warrant Articles for a drone, gear, ambulance equipment, and a compressor. He noted that he has joined the Central NH Hazardous Materials Team.

Police Department: Chief Michael provided Department statics for the year: dispatch calls for service—500 a month average, criminal offenses—297, arrests-120, motor vehicle stops-696, and accidents-93. The Chief noted that the patrols cars are in good shape and they have four full-time positions with one officer in the Academy and another officer slated to start the Academy in January. The Department has increased their visibility at the Epsom Central School and it has been very positive. There will be a Drug Take-Back day on October 28th and the Highway Safety Grants are ongoing. The Chief stated that Dispatch cost is increasing \$10,000 and cost of the new police vehicle will increase \$10,000.

Emergency Management: Director Virgin noted that the generator grant should be closing out shortly and that the Hazard Mitigation Committee continues to meet and work on updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan. He noted that the updates to the Emergency Operations Plan have been finished and noted the improvements to the radio communication used at the Epsom Central School as part of their emergency planning.

Planning Board: Mr. McKechnie noted there is currently a proposed solar farm on Granny Howe before the Board and there is proposed additional work at the Cobblestone development. The Board continues to work updating Site Plan regulations. Ms. Gilpatrick stated the zoning amendment process has started and they will be starting to form subcommittees.

Library: Ms. Camidge stated that 16,000 items have been checked out, 152 new patron cards issued, and 6,000 online checkouts. She noted that the Trustees have been reviewing policies. Ms. Camidge and Ms. John were awarded a grant to become a Family Place Library and have attended training and detailed the multi-week sessions they will host focusing on the core components of parent-child workshops, collections, specially designed spaces, collaborations and partnerships, programs for babies and toddlers, and outreach starting in October. The Library also received a grant to bring literacy outside but will have to contend with the grounds drainage issue first. She noted that 158 kids signed up for the summer reading program and many businesses donated to this program.

Town Clerk: The Town Clerk was unable to attend; Ms. Gilpatrick read her report on her behalf. She noted that her office has been quite lately. She is working on updating to EB2gov online payments; there will be a 2.99% fee for credit card transaction, which is what is already being paid for over the counter credit card transactions. This should take about a month to process and she will post when it is set to go live. She is working on switching to EB2gov for tax payments as well. Residents will be able to pay all their online transaction via one website. There is no cost to the Town, residents pay 2.99% fee to use a credit card / debit card and only a small amount for an ACH payment.

Parks and Recreation Commission: Ms. Gilpatrick noted there have been a significant number of improvements at Webster Park thanks to the help of volunteers and the Epsom Old Home Weekend Association. She stated the Commission has implemented a post-reservation survey, which has provided great feedback.

Other Business: Ms. Gilpatrick explained there is meeting space at the Epsom Manor that may become available for the Town to use and that the Board is looking into this. Ms. Drew stated the Board is researching the creation of a Historic District Commission and/or Heritage Commission and will be scheduling a meeting with a Preservation and Planning Coordinator from Historical Resources. The Board is researching becoming a Certified Local Government to assist with getting grants. Ms. Drew noted that the creation of an HDC/HC would have to go before the voters as a Warrant Article.

Signature / Approval Items

- Certification of Yield Taxes Assessed R02-2 - Signed

FYI / Correspondence

Merrimack County Annual Report Fiscal Year 22

Public Comment

Select Board Reports

Ms. Drew

Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee: The Committee is meeting this Saturday and they have received an update from Mr. McKechnie on the bathroom project.

Historic District Commission / Heritage Commission: Ms. Drew will work on setting up a meeting with the Board and Brandee Laughlin and Megan Rupnik from the Division of Historic Resources.

The Board instructed Ms. Vanslyvong-Bizier to send them the raises spreadsheet she had created.

Approval of Minutes

It was the consensus of the Board to table review of the 9/5/2023 minutes until the next meeting.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 9/11/2023 minutes, as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 8/21/2023 non-public minutes, as written. **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. Gilpatrick to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Novotney
Administrative Assistant