

**Town of Epsom  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes  
October 3, 2023 at 5:15 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 5:15 PM.

Staff Present: Jerrica Vansylyvong-Bizier, Finance Administrator; Stewart Yeaton, Fire Chief; Brian Michael, Police Chief; Scott Elliott, Road Agent; Laura Scarbo, Town Clerk / Tax Collector; Ted Virgin, Emergency Management Director; Terry Riel, Betsy Bosiak, and Nancy Claris, Supervisors of the Checklist

Others Presents: Penny Graham and Linda Hodgdon

Ms. Gilpatrick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Review and Accept or Amend the Agenda**

Ms. Vansylyvong-Bizier added acceptance of a donation to the Meetinghouse Historic Trust Fund. Ms. Gilpatrick added an email from a resident regarding road striping. Ms. Drew added decorating of the Town Office.

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

**Budget Presentations**

**Road Agent**

The Board reviewed the Highway Department budget with Road Agent Scott Elliott. Mr. Elliott noted the following changes to the Highway budget.

Increased budget lines:

Part-time employee line: \$2,000, snow removal: \$15,000, paving and striping: \$2,000, salt line: \$5,000, sand line: \$2,000, telephone line: \$200, vehicle maintenance: \$3,000, heat line increased by \$1,000 but may be adjusted after reviewing the propane contract price.

Decreased budget lines:

Street maintenance: \$2,000, rentals and leases: \$7,700, gas fuel line: \$3,000, electricity: \$500, repairs and maintenance: \$2,000, and road building expense: \$1,500.

Mr. Elliott noted that he tentatively plans to stripe Center Hill Road, Griffin Road, Mountain Road, and Echo Valley Farm Road in 2024. Ms. Drew asked what the criteria was for striping and Mr. Elliott stated the criteria is safety for traveling on roads at night, if it's a cut-through road to another town, and if the road has received its top-coat. Mr. Elliott also noted he tries to strip the busier roads first and restripes

when the road has worn down. It was the consensus of the Board that Ms. Gilpatrick will speak to the resident who emailed regarding striping and also draft a response to the resident, for the Board to review.

### **Police Department**

The Board reviewed the Police Department budget with Chief Brian Michael. Chief Michael noted the difficulties of hiring and staff retention. The computer support line was raised \$1,500, dispatch line increased \$10,000, printing line increased \$900, gas line reduced \$2,000, vehicle line increased \$10,000, and heat line decreased by \$1,000. Chief Michael discussed the building repairs that need to be done at the Police Station. Ms. Gilpatrick suggested Chief Michael speak to the Town maintenance person. The Chief stated he is still working on gathering quotes for the AC system.

### **Town Clerk / Tax Collector**

The Board reviewed the Town Clerk, Tax Collector, and Election budgets with Clerk Laura Searbo and the Supervisors of the Checklist Terry Riel and Betsy Bosiak.

#### **Town Clerk**

The telephone line was increased, computer support line was increased, training and conferences line was lowered, repairs and maintenance line was decreased and printing line was increased due to the four elections.

#### **Elections**

The office supplies line was increased for the Supervisors to purchase a filing cabinet and checklist scanners. Ms. Gilpatrick asked if the Supervisors had looked in to purchasing a filing cabinet from the State Surplus and to explain what the checklist scanners were. Ms. Searbo explained that the scanners scan the barcodes on the voter checklist and two would be ideal. The Board advised the Supervisors to work with the Town Office staff on ordering office supplies. The election meals line was increased due to the four elections in 2024. Terry Riel noted that the Supervisors are looking to have their stipend increased to \$1,000 per Supervisor the even years due to the increase in elections those years and the stipend to be \$750 in the odd years. Ms. Riel and Ms. Bosiak detailed for the Board the work the Supervisors do and time they spend on the work required. The Board suggested trying to purchase the file cabinet and scanners out of this year's budget. The Ballot Clerk line was increased to \$300 and the office supplies line reduced to \$200.

#### **Tax Collector**

The telephone line and computer support line were increased, training and conference line was decreased, and the postage line was increased because Ms. Searbo would like to hire a company to fold, sort, and mail the property tax bills.

### **Emergency Management**

The Board reviewed the Emergency Management budget with Emergency Management Director Ted Virgin. The telephone line has been increased \$110 and the equipment line increased \$2,500. The Board and the Director discussed improvements that could be made to the Emergency Operations Center and what grants are available. The Board and the Director discussed with Ms. Vansylvong-Bizier the creation of an Emergency Management Maintenance Fund; Ms. Vansylvong-Bizier will review this with the DRA. It was determined that \$1,000 should be moved from the training line to the equipment line.

### **Fire Department**

The Board reviewed the Fire Department budget with Fire Chief Stewart Yeaton and noted the following changes.

Increased budget lines:

The equipment line: \$2,000, uniform line: \$200, gas and diesel lines: \$1,000 each, dues line: \$25, and the telephone line: \$90.

Decreased budget lines:

- After reviewing the fixed price propane contract the Chief believed he could reduce the heating line by \$300 and the water line was reduced by \$220.
- The dispatch was reduced, hazmat line removed and special details was increased. Ms. Vansylvong-Bizier will research if the Fire Department special details should be set up the same as the Police Department special details.

The Chief explained to the Board the staff recruitment and retention difficulties to the Department is experiencing. Ms. Wysocki noted she has been researching other towns pay ranges and call volumes. The Board discussed the difference between a stipend and a salaried Fire Chief and the Chief's current pay scale and job duties. The Chief informed the Board that the Fire Department will be doing an open house on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Signature / Approvals**

**Motion by:** Ms. Drew to accept the \$25 donation to the Meetinghouse Historic Trust Fund from Michael Arvanitis. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

### **Discussion**

#### **Decorating the Town Office**

The Office Assistant has requested to purchase mums and pumpkins for decoration around the exterior of the Town Office. It was the consensus of the Board to not incur this expense.

### **Adjournment**

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

**Motion by:** Ms. Drew to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Andrea Novotney  
Administrative Assistant