

**TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
BUDGET PRESENTATIONS
October 15, 2019 AT 5:30 PM**

Hugh Curley
Virginia Drew
Cheryl Gilpatrick

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

Staff Present: Nancy Wheeler, Dawn Calley-Murdough, Alison Parodi-Bieling, Glenn Horner, Jay Hickey, Patricia Hickey, Stewart Yeaton, Wayne Preve

Other Attendees: Dennis Ketner, Deb Sargent, Meadow Wysocki, Joni Kitson, Mary Frambach, Linda Hodgdon, Tony Soltani

Virginia called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and asked Alison to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Virginia reviewed the agenda and no changes were needed.

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

Signature/Approval Items:

Motion by: Hugh to appoint Peter MacCallum as Deputy Boat Inspector for the term of October 7, 2019 to March 31, 2020. **Second by:** Cheryl. **Vote:** 3 - 0 in favor.

Budget Presentation Discussion:

Conservation Commission/Swimming Lessons: Alison stated she is proposing no changes to the Swimming Lesson budget for 2020. The 2019 program had 45 students with three paid instructors, and five aides who are former swim students that hope to become certified lifeguards. Pittsfield charges \$50 a day for the use of the Pittsfield town pool. Alison stated she included funds to pay for the instructor background checks.

Alison stated she is requesting additional operating funds for conservation land acquisition in 2020. The Conservation Commission hopes to purchase two properties in the next 12 months, adding to the Town Forest. The first parcel already has a purchase and sale agreement, and will deplete the Conservation Fund in 2019, which also included a grant from Bear Paw. There is the hope to use funds from the conservation capital reserve funds and a warrant article will be drafted for the second purchase for 2020. The acquisition and transactions costs are expected to cost less than anticipated, but survey's still need to be completed.

The board and Alison agreed they would meet again to discuss the plans of the Conservation Commission and the proposed purchases.

The board thanked Alison for coming in.

Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee: Deb stated the committee is requesting \$500.00 for the 2020 operating budget. The biggest expenses for the committee has been stamps, cleaning supplies, and printing supplies. The most recent printing has taken place at the town office with the town printer and supplies.

TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
BUDGET PRESENTATIONS
October 15, 2019 AT 5:30 PM

The town received the award for the Moose Plate grant and \$17,940.00 will be received for the stained glass windows. The LCHIP grant proposal is for approximately \$44,000.00 and the town match amount will be approximately \$18,000.00, and can be raised with cash or by work in kind. The current total donation amount received for the Meetinghouse Fund is approximately \$5,657.00.

The OMRC has been working with the Historical Society about possibly sharing funds from stocks donated to the Historical Society by Mr. Nutter. Virginia clarified Val is talking with the Historical Society to possibly utilize some of the funds.

Hugh asked if the committee planned to spend money on additional fundraising. Deb stated the committee is completing more fundraising face to face and is trying not to use any operating funds for fundraising efforts, except for possible mailing costs. The committee is also increasing efforts to use crowd funding.

Virginia stated there are a lot of efforts put forth by the committee members to try and raise funds. The board thanked Deb for coming in.

Zoning Board of Adjustment: Glenn stated he estimated the number of cases for 2020, with approximately 13 to 14 cases for 2019. He reduced the 2020 budget approximately 12%, with an expectation of fewer legal needs and secretarial services. Training and Conferences was reduced, as fewer people attend. Glenn reminded everyone that many of the ZBA expenses are offset by the incoming application fees/revenue.

Glenn answered that he felt comfortable reducing the amount needed for secretarial duties. Virginia stated the ZBA members receive no financial payment for their service. Cheryl asked what type of publication fees the ZBA has and Glenn stated it is the publishing of hearing notices in the newspaper.

The board thanked Glenn for coming in.

Zoning Compliance Officer: Jay stated he has requested a small raise in salary and he is asking the board to consider hiring an assistant with a higher number of received permits. Jay stated some of the Zoning Compliance expenses are offset with the received permit fees. Jay answered he works approximately 25 hours a week during the winter and approximately 30 hours a week in the summer. However there are many weeks where 30 hours is not enough with the number of projects going on in town.

Jay stated he would love to see an assistant help with inspections and to start training for his possible future replacement. General discussion took place about the starting pay for an assistant and some research for comparative positions would take place.

Hugh asked if the town should request permits for electrical and plumbing work, and if it might compensate the need for an assistant. It was stated the town Fire Department currently only

TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
BUDGET PRESENTATIONS
October 15, 2019 AT 5:30 PM

inspects electric and plumbing for Life Safety work, but the board would try to find funds to pay for additional assistance.

Discussion took place about the fact that the town has not adopted building codes, and it might be something the Selectmen consider putting forward with a warrant article for town meeting. If building codes are adopted, it would allow the board to hire a building inspector.

The board thanked Jay for coming in.

Welfare: Patty stated she has been trying to keep rental assistance under control, but she would like to increase the amount a little bit higher for 2020. She expects to stay within her budget for 2019, but it could depend on the winter expenses the next couple of months.

Virginia asked what types of payments are included in the Other/Misc account. Hugh asked about Designated Misc. Patty stated it can include special medications. Nancy stated the Designated Misc. account was to account for donations that had a specific purpose, but it hasn't been used in that way for a number of years.

Patty answered she is comfortable with the amount budgeted for heat and oil. She has approximately 10 to 12 active cases, which is slightly higher than the prior year.

It was stated the Welfare Salary account did include a slight change in amount, but it also includes the amount needed for the 27th bi-weekly pay period.

The board thanked Patty for coming in.

Fire: Stewart informed the board that the department's full time Paramedic has resigned effective the end of October. This may mean additional changes for the 2020 Salary budget amount, which already includes a small increase. Salary accounts have also been increased based on the amount needed for the 27th pay period. Any other adjustments will wait until the board makes any decisions about salary changes. Stewart stated Epsom continues to struggle to keep staff with the higher salaries offered by other communities.

Stewart stated he is concerned about the amount in the Teaching account, as the resigning Paramedic was the teacher and offered his services for free, which probably won't continue.

The Fire Department will need to purchase oxygen for the oxygen tanks in 2020, as the previously used oxygen generator refilling machine is expired and broken. The replacement cost is approximately \$13,000.00 for a used machine, but the department doesn't use that much oxygen to justify replacing the machine at that cost.

Hugh asked if the equipment repair account was reduced. Stewart stated it was, but some of the difference will be seen with an increase in the Training account.

**TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
BUDGET PRESENTATIONS
October 15, 2019 AT 5:30 PM**

Stewart answered the amount needed for Dispatch is determined by the County and is based on town property value and the number of calls; Epsom is a smaller contributor versus the larger places like the City of Concord or Town of Warner.

Stewart informed the board he essentially brought forward the same budget as he proposed in 2019. The increase in part time salary is to try and gain a higher number of part time employees to provide an ability to respond to calls. Discussion took place about how the Fire Department determines the salary amount for staff members, and Stewart stated it would be better to make changes based on employee training and experience and not solely based on job titles.

Stewart stated the call volume in Epsom justifies the Department having 24 hours 7 days a week coverage and expressed concern about having another default budget in 2020. There was agreement by all to try and find a way to get the voters to understand the Fire Department needs to increase salaries, as it can't continue to function on the existing pay rates, and hiring and keeping personnel is becoming more and more difficult.

Hugh asked if Stewart eliminated items from his budget because he was concerned it would be rejected by the voters and Stewart stated he did and he is concerned.

Stewart answered he will submit a warrant article to add another full time employee, at an approximate total of \$30,000.00. This would provide him with an employee for six month in 2020 and the amount includes equipment and employee insurances. He will also be submitting a warrant article for new radios, which will be purchased from the Ambulance Fund. He excluded an amount for part time staff uniforms by repurposing and refitting existing equipment.

Stewart stated he would be able to provide a more detailed list of calls, if the board wanted one. General discussion took place about whether the town would benefit from utilizing an intercept paramedic from another town versus hiring their own paramedic. Stewart stated he has done some research and an intercept paramedic isn't always available for Epsom calls, and Epsom has enough calls to potentially justify their own.

The board thanked Stewart from coming in.

Police: Wayne reviewed the proposed 2020 Police Department budget, stating there have been decreases in the Computer Support, Dispatch, Training & Conf., and Equipment Purchases.

Virginia asked if the decrease in Equipment Purchases caused concern. Wayne stated he will try to purchase additional supplies at the end of the year 2019, if funds are available. He will also try to purchase a new vehicle at the end of the year if there are funds, with a request to encumber the 2019 funds if needed. He also plans to purchase another vehicle in 2020, keeping the department on track with planned vehicle purchases. A new car won't be requested in 2021, if he can keep on track. General discussion took place about how much wear and tear the operation hours mean for the vehicle versus actual miles driven and Wayne would include the operating hours to his mileage reports.

**TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
BUDGET PRESENTATIONS
October 15, 2019 AT 5:30 PM**

Cheryl asked about the total price of a vehicle, including the cost for all the additional equipment. Wayne stated the manufacturer increased the base price of the vehicle in 2019, bringing a fully equipped cruiser to approximately \$40,000.00. Changes in the vehicle build and design means he cannot transition equipment from a current vehicle to the new vehicle, but he will use what equipment he can.

Wayne stated he will consider selling some of the older unused equipment at the State of NH surplus auction in the spring.

Wayne stated he made some increases in Full Time salary lines, and decreased the Over Time account now that he is fully staffed. He continues to try and plan training times that use the least amount of over time. Virginia reported the state received additional funds for PTSD and grief training, which might be available to Epsom. Wayne stated he would look into it, but he is using more online training for a lower cost.

There are increases in utilities because of the current market. A request was submitted to fund the DARE program, purchasing snacks, a t-shirt, and a small gift from DARE for the participating kids. Wayne stated he is finding it harder to keep going back to local businesses to try and fund these extra events and activities sponsored by the department. The Events and Activities accounts include public programs like DARE, Trunk or Treat, the Toy Drive, Student School Backpacks, and other community events.

Virginia expressed concern about decreasing the Training line, but appreciates the effort to keep the budget low. Wayne stated he could move some of the decrease from overtime to training, but he is concerned the 2020 operating budget won't pass with the voters and he is really looking to increase salary rates. Salary rates are too low to keep staff for any length of time, and having another year with a default budget would be very tough on the department.

General discussion took place about the salaries for the different types of positions at the Police Department and the duties of different positions.

General discussion took place about alternative vehicle options to try and get a new cruiser for 2019. Wayne stated he will look at all the available options for a vehicle purchase.

Hugh asked if Wayne could provide additional information about duties or tasks that may still need to be completed from the MRI Department Report. Virginia stated the full board should discuss the request prior to asking Wayne complete an update on the report. Cheryl expressed agreement.

Virginia asked Hugh to discuss any special requests of department heads at a board meeting before asking the department head. This could even be completed via email through the Administrative Assistant.

**TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
BUDGET PRESENTATIONS
October 15, 2019 AT 5:30 PM**

Virginia stated she will present the proposed town 2020 budget to the Budget Committee at their November 11th meeting. The Select Board will continue to review individual department budgets on October 22, and will hold at least one more budget review meeting on October 28th.

Selectmen Reports:

Hugh: stated the Fire Department is losing the Paramedic, but he is leaving for a good position and feels bad about leaving the department short staffed.

Hugh distributed the 2017 wage survey for the Police Department as they consider salary changes. Nancy stated she would also update the salary matrix for the board.

Cheryl: The Planning Board is still waiting for the developer attorney to respond regarding the agreement for Gauthier Drive.

The F550 is dead again, with repair cost estimated at \$5,500.00, means the department is now down a work truck, and the Road Agent is looking at rental costs. Nancy stated she continues to try and get an answer about insurance coverage for a truck rental from the insurance company. Hugh asked if the insurance plan can be adjusted or can a waiver be considered and Nancy stated she would ask.

Virginia: The Zoning Board is meeting tomorrow and the Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee is meeting Thursday. The OMRC is working hard to try and find a way to come up with the funds needed for a matching grant. The Library Trustees will be presenting their budget to the board at the October 22nd meeting.

Public Comments:

Joni asked if the Selectmen will consider changing insurance companies for property liability insurance coverage in 2020. Nancy stated the town has had to make some adjustments with the change to commercial insurance versus prior coverage through Primex. The board can consider requesting proposals for property liability insurance in 2020 if they wanted.

Other Business:

Adjourn the Meeting

8:01 PM Motion by: Cheryl to adjourn the meeting. **Second by:** Hugh. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Calley-Murdough