

**Town of Epsom
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
October 30, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

Cheryl Gilpatrick, Chair
Virginia Drew, Vice Chair
Meadow Wysocki (Virtually)

Approved: **Drew / Wysocki**
Vote: **In favor, 3-0**

Call to Order:

Ms. Gilpatrick called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Ms. Gilpatrick noted that Ms. Wysocki was unable to attend the meeting in person for medical reasons and would be attending the meeting remotely.

Ms. Drew led Pledge of Allegiance.

Staff Present: Andrea Novotney, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board; Deb Sullivan, Finance Administrator; Kaitlin Camidge, Librarian; Pat Curley, Library Trustee

Others Presents: Deb Sargent; Len Gilman

Review and Accept or Amend the Agenda

Ms. Novotney added the Northwood Lake Watershed Association funding request for discussion and the Highway Safety Speed Equipment Grant for signature/approval. Ms. Drew added a Zoning Board of Adjustment member resignation submittal for discussion.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to accept the agenda as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Finance Report

Motion by: Ms. Drew to accept the \$100 raised by the OMRC bell ringing fundraiser. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Ms. Sullivan inquired if the previous years of service for herself and Ms. Novotney should be factored into the annual leave calculation. It was the consensus of the Board the previous years of service should be factored in towards the calculation of annual leave and the next update to the Employee Handbook should include this for employees who return within two years of their leave date.

Administrative Assistant

Ms. Novotney provided the Board with a draft minutes policy to review at a future meeting and informed the Board she will be meeting with one of the IT consultants from Umbral Technologies on Wednesday.

Discussion

Tax Rate Setting

The Board and Ms. Sullivan reviewed the 2023 tax rate scenarios, previous years' tax rates, payments to the School, and the DRA's recommended unassigned fund balance range. Ms. Sullivan noted that she has projected the year-end estimate for the current budget.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to use \$400,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance to reduce the tax rate from \$25.40 to \$24.63. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Scheduled Appointments

Library Trustees/Old Library Memo of Understanding Discussion

The Board reviewed and edited the draft Old Library MOU with Ms. Camidge and Ms. Curley. They discussed the items donated to the Library that are currently stored at the Old Library, the intent of those donations, the Historical Association not being a Town entity, and insurance coverage on items stored in the building. It was the consensus of the Board, Ms. Camidge, and Ms. Curley that this most recent updated draft MOU should be sent to legal counsel for review and to receive advice on the donated items stored in the Old Library.

Discussion

Town Hall Complex Parking Areas

The Board reviewed quotes received from Manchester Paving LLC and GMI Asphalt. Ms. Gilpatrick stated that Advanced noted they would not have time in their schedules and she has spoken to Keith Cota and he is willing to assist in reviewing any plans. It was the consensus of the Board to have the Road Agent, Ms. Gilpatrick, and Keith Cota, meet the paving contractor. Ms. Drew also suggested including George Carlson.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to move forward with the quote from Manchester Paving for the paving of the driveway to the upper level of the Meetinghouse and to include the parking lot roadway and ramp, pending review by Keith Cota, resident engineer. This project will utilize ARPA funds and the repairs and maintenance line. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Bulletin Board Policy

The Board discussed the need for additional space to place notifications in the vestibule for community events without damaging the walls. It was the consensus of the Board that Ms. Novotney should purchase an additional bulletin board for the entry way area to be hung on the end wall by the map table.

Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) Member Resignation

Ms. Drew stated that Ryan Kehoe has submitted his resignation as a member of the ZBA. Ms. Drew noted that he has been an outstanding member of the Board and she hopes that he finds time and interest to return as either an alternate or as a member again in the future.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to accept, with regret, Ryan Kehoe's resignation from the ZBA. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Northwood Lake Watershed Association (NLWA) Funding Request

Ms. Novotney stated that the NLWA had submitted their funding request and had updated the wording to not only include milfoil but to also address additional invasive species and aquatic bacteria. It was the consensus of the Board to accept the wording change, if it is included as a Warrant Article.

2024 Budget Review

- Planning Board printing line reduced to \$300.
- Fire Department special details line adjusted to \$1,080.
- General Government Buildings: To account for the Old Library the electricity line was increased to \$11,800. Heat line increased to \$8,000. Water line increased to \$1,200.
- The Board discussed the Library budget and the costs associated with the Old Library being removed from the Library budget but still being part of the overall Town budget.
- BCEP cost projected to be the same with no increase.
- Ms. Sullivan noted that the hydrant rental cost will be staying the same and the Water District stated there will be no proration for hydrants that are not working, as they will be fixed. The Board discussed hydrants that have not been working for the past year. It was the consensus of the Board to write a letter to the Water District concerning this issue.
- The Board discussed Ms. Wysocki's upcoming presentation of the budget to Budget Committee.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve as the Select Board the final budget in the amount of \$ 4,125,280 to be presented to the Budget Committee. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

It was the consensus of the Board that Ms. Sullivan should create new lines called computer expense under the individual departments and over expend those lines for the new computer purchases.

Signature / Approval Items:

- Highway Safety Speed Equipment Grant

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the Police Department request to pursue the Highway Safety Speed Equipment Grant. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

- Parks & Recreation Appointment Renewal

Motion by: Ms. Drew to appoint Eric Reid to the Parks and Recreation Commission through 12/31/25. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

- Umbral Technologies Contract – Signed

Public Comment

Deb Sargent

Ms. Sargent inquired about elections on November 7, 2023 and Ms. Drew confirmed that date is for NH cities.

Len Gilman

Mr. Gilman inquired about the old landfill in Pittsfield as well as the one located at the Highway Department and asked if the Board aware of any plans to address these locations in the future. Ms. Drew stated BCEP has money put aside for the Pittsfield location but no plans have been discussed recently. Mr. Gilman noted his concerns about the structure of BCEP and the involvement of the other participating Towns. Mr. Gilman also inquired about a new sign for the Town Hall and noted he felt it should say Town Office Complex.

Select Board Reports

Ms. Wysocki

Conservation Commission: Progress is being made on the timber cut in the Town Forest, however, there has been an issue with people going around the logging vehicles and doing damage to the road. The Town Forester will be preparing a mock-up of the improvements to the Town Forest parking area.

Fire Department: The Department's recent open house was a big success and well attended.

Hazard Mitigation Committee: The Committee was not able to meet last week due to illness.

Ms. Drew

Zoning Board of Adjustment: The Board has a meeting on the November 1st and likely another on the 15th. The Board has been dealing with a number of cases and Ms. Drew noted she appreciates all the time and work being done by the members.

BCEP: The BCEP met last Thursday and went over their budget and it appears that the budget will be same as last year, due to increases in interest revenue and a change in their health insurance copay which will cover the proposed 6% salary increase. The BCEP will be meeting in November on the 16th, which is the 3rd Thursday, but allows them to avoid meeting on Thanksgiving. The BCEP Public Hearing on their budget will be scheduled for December 7th at 5:30 PM and Ms. Drew would encourage the other Board members to attend.

Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee: The Committee had to reschedule their October 28th meeting to November 4th. The Committee members will be manning a table at the ECS school craft fair on December 2nd to sell ornaments and to continue seeking support for the Meetinghouse renovations. The LCHIP stewardship report for the Meetinghouse is due by the end of December and Ms. Drew will be completing the report in November.

Police Department: The Chief recently traveled to the Berlin prison to conduct an interview concerning an assault case. The Department has made arrests for DUI, operating after suspension, theft, and possession of controlled drugs and they continue to handle an increased number of calls for service daily.

The Department currently has one officer at the Academy who has a projected graduation of November 2023 and his field training should be completed by March 2024. They also have an applicant scheduled to start the Academy in January 2024 and he is doing a physical fitness test weekly and passing the exam. There is still one full-time patrolman position open and the Department is currently in the hiring process with an individual. The Department will be scheduling the second firearms training in the next few weeks and Administrative Assistant Quimby and Officer Johansson will be attending Sex Offender Registry training next week and Officer Johansson will also be attending Background Investigations training. All staff members have completed their Sexual Harassment and Cyber Security training. The 2024 Highway Safety Grants have been approved. The Chief has received an estimate for replacement of the air conditioning system and he is working on getting two more quotes. He has also received a quote to reconstruct the evidence room in the basement. The evidence room was built around the oil tank and there is currently no access to the oil tank. The four patrol cars were inspected in September and there were no issues and the 2017 detail car was sold at auction for approximately \$4,000.

Ms. Gilpatrick

Highway Department: The Road Agent reports that on October 5th someone stole a leaf blower and weed whacker out of the back of the Department truck parked on Monroe Avenue. This incident has been reported to Chief Michael with all the pertinent information. The Department has been working on the road maintenance they were not able to complete due to the heavy rains this summer. They have finished as much of the road maintenance as they could and the excavator has been returned and they are now getting ready for winter. Ms. Gilpatrick noted that she and the Road Agent met with the Town Engineer and a resident on Echo Valley Farm Road and the Town Engineer will be submitting a memo to the Board.

Town Clerk / Tax Collector: Ms. Searbo reported she will not be open on Saturdays for the foreseeable future and possibly beyond. She and the Deputy were in the office on the Saturday in January, February, and June (the day before taxes were due) and not one person came in those days. Their office has been closed every other Saturday this year and no one has had an issue getting registrations done or paying taxes on time. There are also no remaining Saturdays for 2023 (Thanksgiving and Christmas) so there is no issue for the rest of the year. She understands that 2024 is going to be busy with elections and will be playing it by ear, but if needed, she will be staying late to collect absentee ballots and other things. She figures the General Election may be a little busier so she will be planning accordingly for that as well.

Ms. Searbo notes that they are still waiting on the changes to the payments for the online transactions and she has purchased the new credit card machines for the office as well. The fees will be changing and she has put up notices on bright yellow paper in hopes residents will see them. She has also received approval from Fish and Game to issue hunting and fishing licenses. She has to send in additional paperwork and will be taking a class and hopes to begin offering these soon. Ms. Searbo participated in another voting drive on October 24th at Pembroke Academy to register high school students and they registered six new voters.

Parks and Recreation Commission: The Commission had their October meeting and reviewed all finished projects and those they hope to accomplish in the upcoming year. They also reviewed the remainder of the budget and hope to purchase supplies for the upcoming year. The Commission also

discussed the reforestation fund which is getting very low. The fund is typically funded by donations so the Commission can purchase new trees to be planted. They also discussed the need for a few more of the large pines to come down and the preparation of the skating rink, which will most likely be set up near the end of November.

Planning Board: The Board met last Wednesday and reviewed the status of the Master Plan which is making good progress and is on schedule to be completed before the end of the year. They also reviewed the status of the proposed Zoning amendments they wish to have ready for the 2024 Town Meeting. Currently they have five, maybe six that should be ready to appear on the ballot. Public Hearings will be held starting in December and will be posted accordingly.

The Board approved the solar farm on Granny Howe Road, which included a couple of bonds that will need to be secured with the Town for decommissioning costs as well as a bond to protect the road during construction. Ms. Gilpatrick noted she will ask the people in charge of the power to come in and talk to the Board about the possibility of reduced rates for residents and how that would work, should the Town choose to offer a Warrant Article for the residents to vote on.

Non-Public

Motion by: Ms. Drew to enter in non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 9:03 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to come out of non-public at 9:24 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to seal the minutes. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to enter in non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II (l) at 9:24 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to come out of non-public at 9:43 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to seal the minutes. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 10/16/23 public minutes as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 10/19/23 public minutes as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 10/19/23 public minutes as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki.
Motion passed unanimously: Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 10/16/23 non-public minutes as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki.
Motion passed unanimously: Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Adjournment

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

Motion by: Ms. Drew to adjourn the meeting at 9:59 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** Ms. Drew – Aye, Ms. Wysocki – Aye, Ms. Gilpatrick – Aye.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Novotney
Administrative Assistant