

**Town of Epsom
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
December 11, 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.

Ms. Drew led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Staff Present: Andrea Novotney, Administrative Assistant to the Select Board; Deb Sullivan, Finance Administrator; Scott Elliott, Road Agent; Stewart Yeaton, Fire Chief; Ted Virgin, Emergency Management Director

Others Presents: Deb Sargent, Mike Keeler

Review and Accept or Amend the Agenda

Ms. Wysocki added a private road for discussion and acceptance of a donation for the Webster Park Reforestation Trust Fund. Ms. Drew added the informational session for discussion.

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

Finance Report

Motion by: Ms. Drew to accept the \$50 received through the sale of the Meetinghouse ornaments. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

Ms. Sullivan presented the Revenue Budget for 2024 for review. The interest and penalties on taxes was adjusted to \$22,000. Ms. Sullivan presented the Default Budget for 2024 for review and detailed how she calculates the Default Budget.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the Default Budget as presented in the amount of \$4,085,421. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

Ms. Sullivan provided an Expenditures to Date Report for review.

Scheduled Appointments:

Sealed Bid Opening for Town Complex Parking Area

- Manchester Paving \$136,500
- Advanced Excavating and Paving \$177,347

- GMI Asphalt LLC \$198,200
- CR Demers Construction \$197,200

Ms. Novotney will provide the bids to the Road Agent for review and the Board asked that Mr. Elliott also review them with Keith Cota.

Fire Department, Emergency Management, and Highway Department: Warrant Articles

Fire Department

Article 5: Chief Yeaton stated this will be for firefighter turn out gear and the Department is attempting to replace five sets at a time. Ms. Gilpatrick noted that the CIP will need to be updated in regard to this.

Article 6: Chief Yeaton explained this will be for high-pressure air compressor. The Chief stated the current compressor is over 40 years old and the Department has tried for the last four years for a grant to replace it but has been unsuccessful.

Article 7: Chief Yeaton noted this is for the creation of special details revolving fund. Ms. Sullivan noted her discussion with the DRA concerning the writing of this Warrant Article.

Chief Yeaton stated he is attempting to purchase the drone out of the 2023 budget.

Highway Dept

Article 8: Mr. Elliott stated this is for a five-year lease-to-own agreement for the purpose of leasing an excavator. Mr. Elliott also noted there is an escape clause in the agreement if Article 8 does not pass.

Emergency Management

Article 12: Mr. Virgin explained this is to establish an Emergency Management Equipment Capital Reserve Fund and discussed the need to establish the fund to take advantage of matching fund grant opportunities in the future.

Discussion

Draft Warrant Articles

Ms. Sullivan presented the remaining draft Warrant Articles for review. It was the consensus of the Board to adjust the wording of Article 17 to indicate it is dependent on Article 16 passing. Article 1 was not voted on as it has not been finalized.

ARTICLE 2: Shall the Town vote to establish a contingency fund for the 2024 year for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) from the Unassigned Fund Balance to go into the fund? Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund. Majority vote required. This Article and its appropriation are in addition to the operating budget.

No tax impact.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 2 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be added to the previously established Expendable Trust Fund for the Maintenance of Historic Town-Owned Buildings with said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

No tax impact.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 3 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be added to the previously established Government Buildings Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund with said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

No tax impact.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 4 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of seventeen thousand six hundred and seventeen dollars (\$17,617) for the purpose of purchasing five sets of firefighter turn out gear for the Fire Department, and further authorize the withdrawal of the same amount of seventeen thousand six hundred and seventeen dollars (\$17,617) from the Fire and Rescue Apparatus Fund for that purpose? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and is in addition to the operating budget.

No tax impact.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 5 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of eighty-nine thousand six hundred and seventy dollars (\$89,670) for the purpose of purchasing a High-Pressure Air Compressor for the Fire Department, and further authorize the withdrawal of the same amount of eighty-nine thousand six hundred and seventy dollars (\$89,670) from the Fire and Rescue Apparatus Fund for that purpose? This compressor will replace the existing compressor that was previously purchased in 1980. Majority vote required. This is a special Warrant Article and is in addition to the operating budget.

No tax impact.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 6 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the town vote to establish a Fire Department Details Revolving Fund pursuant to RSA 31:95-h? All revenues received from fees for Fire Department Details shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year and shall not be considered to be part of the Town's general fund unreserved fund balance. These funds may be expended only for payroll, payroll related costs and fire department equipment. The town treasurer shall have custody of the funds and shall pay out the same on the order of the Fire Chief.

No tax impact.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 7 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into a five year lease-to- own agreement in the amount of one hundred ninety thousand eight hundred and seventy five (\$190,875) for the purpose of leasing an excavator for the Highway Department, and to raise and appropriate the sum of (\$50,000) for the down payment, and to authorize the withdrawal of that same amount of \$50,000 from the Highway Vehicle Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. This lease agreement contains an escape clause. (Majority vote required).

No tax impact.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 8 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the purpose of reconstruction and improvements to town roads? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Estimated tax impact is \$.29 per thousand

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 9 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the purpose of purchasing motorized vehicles and equipment for the Highway Department? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Estimated tax impact is \$.02 per thousand

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 10 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the purpose of bridge replacement and repair? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Estimated tax impact is \$.05 per thousand

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 11 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town vote to establish an Emergency Management Equipment Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of purchasing emergency management equipment and related project costs, and to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in this fund. Further, to name the Emergency Management Director as the agent to expend from said fund.

Estimated tax impact is \$.02 per thousand

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 12 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be deposited into the Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the potential future expansion of the public water system? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Estimated tax impact is \$.04 per thousand

Motion by: Ms. Drew for a discussion on Article 13. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

The Board discussed the recent grant application, potential new well locations, and the possibility for expansion of the public water system. Ms. Wysocki noted that the Economic Development Committee is still trying to meet with the Water District Commissioners. Ms. Gilpatrick suggested having Mike Tardiff from Central NH Regional Planning Commission and Peter Pitsas from Underwood Engineers come and speak to the Board again.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 13 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the previously established Cemetery Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund, with said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance, which is equivalent to the total amount of cemetery plot sales for 2023? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

No tax impact.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 14 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000) to be used by the Northwood Lake Watershed Association for aquatic invasive species /aquatic bacteria education, prevention, treatment and control in Northwood Lake? Majority vote required. This appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Estimated tax impact is \$.01 per thousand

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 15 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town vote to establish a Heritage Commission in accordance with the provisions of RSA 673 and RSA 674, or take any other action relating thereto.

No tax impact.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 16 as written. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

ARTICLE 17: Shall the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to appoint five citizens as members of the Heritage Commission pursuant to the provisions of RSA 673:4-a and RSA 673:5, and to appoint up to five additional citizens as alternate members, or take any other action relating thereto. This Article is contingent on the passage of Article 16.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to recommend Article 16 as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

Mike Keeler presented to the Board a citizen petition Zoning Amendment for the 2024 ballot and the Board acknowledged receipt.

Encumbrances

The Board discussed possible encumbrances for the Police Station evidence room remodel, Fire Department drone and lighting for the bays, and Conservation Commission signs. The Board and Ms. Sullivan discussed the requirements for encumbering funds. Ms. Sullivan will have the encumbrances ready for the 12/26/23 meeting and will send those to the Board to review in advance of the meeting.

Donation for the Webster Park Reforestation Trust Fund

Motion by: Ms. Wysocki to accept a donation in the amount of \$250 for the Webster Park Reforestation Trust Fund. **Second by:** Ms. Drew. **Motion passed unanimously: 3-0.**

Administrative Assistant

Ms. Novotney noted that the current cleaning company is unable to clean the Police Station during the requested hours. It was the consensus of the Board to have Ms. Novotney review the contract and determine if it can be amended to exclude the Police Station and then issue a new Request for Quotes for cleaning of the Police Station. Ms. Novotney provided the Board with an update on the 2023 Town Report. It was the consensus of the Board to have Ms. Novotney send the edited Library MOU to Ms. Camidge to present to the Library Trustees.

2024 Elections

Ms. Drew stated that all four upcoming elections will be held at the Epsom Bible Church and time for set-up the night before has also been arranged. The Board discussed and determined they will be attending the upcoming Secretary of State election training. The Board discussed the appointments of Selectmen Pro Tem and alternates for the Supervisors of the Checklist. It was noted that Ms. Searbo has reached out to the ballot clerks and is waiting for their responses.

Informational Session

The Board discussed the upcoming Informational Session concerning the possible creation of a Heritage Commission and the importance of explaining the difference between a Heritage Commission and a Historic District.

Private Road

Ms. Wysocki stated a resident has inquired about turning his driveway into a private road as he has concerns about house numbering and mail/package delivery. Ms. Wysocki will discuss this with the Zoning Compliance Officer, Ms. Novotney will contact NHMA legal, and Ms. Gilpatrick will discuss with the Road Agent.

Signature / Approval Items:

- Best Septic Service Agreement Webster Park Portable Toilet Pumping - signed
- Mattice Collins Webster Park Grounds Maintenance Contract - signed
- Parks & Recreation Commission Appointment

Motion by: Ms. Drew to appoint Shauna Fisher as a member of Parks and Recreation Commission through 12/31/2026. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

- Property Tax Payment Agreement

Motion by: Ms. Drew to enter into a property tax payment agreement as proposed by the Town Clerk. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

- OMRC Charter Renewal and Appointments - The Charter will be reviewed for possible edits.

Motion by: Ms. Drew to appoint Chuck Driesbach, Norman Yeaton, George Carlson, and Carol Zink-Mailloux to the Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee through 12/31/2024. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

- Updated Job Descriptions

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the updated job descriptions for the Zoning Compliance Officer and the Police Department Administrative Assistant. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion approved unanimously:** 3-0.

- Supplemental Intent to Cut R11-5-3 - signed

Public Comment

Deb Sargent

Ms. Sargent asked who on the Board was up for re-election and Ms. Drew stated that it was her position up for re-election. Ms. Sargent noted she had attended the recent Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting and was bothered by the way the way certain members of the public behaved in expressing their personal views and she considered their behavior to be inappropriate.

Select Board Reports

Ms. Drew

BCEP: The Public Hearing for the budget did not have a quorum and they will have to meet again this Thursday. Ms. Drew noted she has made a request that the area agreement be reviewed and Ms. Gilpatrick suggested a meeting of the member town Select Boards.

Police Department: Ms. Drew stated the Chief reports that Officer Johansson continues to take on a very active role and Lieutenant Kear has been dealing with a number of issues which he has handled very well. Officer Mullins has begun his field training and the open position has been listed and they will start the hiring process shortly. The Police Association Toy Drive was a great success and the remaining toys were donated to the Merrimack County Advocacy Center. It was noted that all Department vehicles are in good working order with no issues.

Zoning Compliance: The Zoning Compliance Officer reports he has been doing a number of face-to-face meetings concerning future projects and is working with several people who will need to apply for a zoning variance. The ZCO has also been working with the Common Man for their opening.

Library: Ms. Drew will be reaching out to the Library Trustees concerning attending their next meeting.

Ms. Wysocki

Conservation Commission: The Town Forest parking lot expansion is complete, however, there have been washout issues due to the recent heavy rains. The Road Agent believes a culvert would address the issue. Ms. Gilpatrick stated she believes that depending on the location the Commission could authorize the work. Ms. Wysocki noted the Commission may have to hold an additional meeting to vote to expend the funds.

Fire Department: The Chief will be in DC this week, with the full support of the Board, to raise funds for the Capital Area Mutual Aid Fire Compact.

Economic Development Committee: The Committee is working on an informational sheet to present to the Board that would be available at the deliberative session concerning the water expansion Warrant Article. The Committee continues to work on a survey for local businesses and is reaching out again to the Water District Commissioners about attending an upcoming meeting to discuss the water expansion.

Budget Committee: The Committee has met with all the Department Heads and Chairs except for the ZBA Chair who will be attending the 12/21/23 meeting.

Joint Loss Safety Management Committee: An update on the employee trainings was sent out to the Committee members.

Hazard Mitigation Committee: The Committee continues to meet and is making good progress on the plan.

Ms. Gilpatrick

Highway Department: The Road Agent presented the Highway Department budget to the Budget Committee and it went well. He notes the Department continues to perform building maintenance and complete a few small road projects and is also putting summer equipment away for the winter. The Road Agent is also in the planning stage and compiling information to possibly replace the Leighton Brook culvert in the next year or two.

Planning Board: The Board presented their budget to the Budget Committee and it went well. The Board meets this Wednesday and will determine which items can move forward to the public hearing for proposed zoning amendments as well as the completion of the Master Plan.

Tax Collector: The Tax Collector reports the office continues to collect property taxes and are at about 20% received. They had some issues with the new computers on Thursday which caused a problem with the motor vehicle system and they were down for a day or so, but the problem has been corrected.

Parks and Recreation Commission: The Commission Chair presented the 2024 budget to the Budget Committee and the feedback was positive. As of December 1st the Commission's 2023 budget was under by \$261, however, once the December invoices are paid the Chair estimates they be about \$500 over budget. Bartlett Trees will be taking down another large pine tree at the stage as it is gradually leaning more. The Chair was notified by Ms. Novotney that the insurance adjuster requested additional information concerning the concession stand claim and that information has been provided. The Commission also took advantage of the recent Day of Giving to raise awareness for the Park's reforestation efforts and to seek donations. The Chair noted during his presentation to the Budget Committee that the Commission will be looking to replenish this fund in 2024. The Chair also noted that the Request for Quote respondents for grounds maintenance and portable toilet pumping have been contacted with the Board's decision.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by: Ms. Drew to approve the 11/27/23 public minutes as amended. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Adjournment

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

Motion by: Ms. Drew to adjourn the meeting at 10:04 PM. **Second by:** Ms. Wysocki. **Motion passed unanimously:** 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Novotney
Administrative Assistant