

**TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
December 2, 2019 AT 6:00 PM**

Hugh Curley – Absent
Virginia Drew
Cheryl Gilpatrick

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

Staff Present: Nancy Wheeler, Dawn Calley-Murdough

Other Attendees:

Virginia called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Virginia reviewed the agenda and no changes were needed.

Motion by: Cheryl to accept the agenda as presented. **Second by:** Virginia. **Vote:** 2 – 0 in favor.

Appointments: None

Assessing Signature/Approval:

Motion by: Cheryl to approve the abatement for Map U16 Lot 7-72. **Second by:** Virginia. **Vote:** 2 – 0 in favor.

Motion by: Cheryl to approve the abatement for Map U16 Lot 7-49. **Second by:** Virginia. **Vote:** 2 – 0 in favor.

Motion by: Cheryl to approve the abatement for Map U09 Lot 2-94. **Second by:** Virginia. **Vote:** 2 – 0 in favor.

Finance Report: Virginia stated she received information from Chief Preve for proposed work on the Police Department generator and he expressed concern that the cost for repairs is high. Discussion took place about considering other options or requesting quotes for the repairs, including alternate generator repair and maintenance companies. It was stated the Chief wanted to know if there might be funds available in another town account for the repairs if he doesn't have enough in the Police accounts. Nancy stated the generators received general maintenance in 2018, without any repairs, and the generators were purchased in approximately 2007. The board could wait until December 16 to make a decision on funding the repairs and could be encumbered if a contract was signed. Virginia stated she wanted additional information on other quotes for the repairs and Cheryl agreed to consider other companies for the recommended repairs. Virginia stated she would check with the Chief on other companies. Nancy reminded the board the town does have a maintenance contract with Generator Connections, which was signed in the fall of 2019.

The Finance Administrator position was posted in the Concord Monitor on Sunday, was posted on the town website, and will also be posted on a variety of other websites.

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The new laptop was received last Wednesday, and a few other regular office computer maintenance items were resolved. Two new server backup drives were also purchased.

Nancy distributed the preliminary draft warrant articles, stating she did not include a warrant article for the Library roof without a known amount.

The Budget Committee will start their Department Head meetings on Thursday, December 5, and everyone will receive updated expenditure reports. The budget committee will receive the increased amount for BCEP, along with answers to their previously asked budget questions. The Selectmen should be aware that for budgeting purposes the salary amounts included on individual salary lines do not equal only 40 hours a week, as the calculation includes additional hours for different departments depending on the needs of each position.

Virginia stated the protocol for Budget Committee members asking questions about the proposed budget is to contact the committee Chair, who will then reach out to Nancy for the answers. This prevents Nancy from receiving multiple emails asking the same questions.

The town auditors will start their preliminary work on December 12. They will return in February for the more detailed work review of the 2019 financial information.

Nancy stated she received legal opinions regarding the increase for BCEP and retirement expenses. The increase for BCEP can be included in the default budget because it is considered to be an agreement between the town and BCEP for waste management. The financial requirements for the two retirements can also be included in the default. The board would discuss the default budget discussed at their December 16 meeting.

Warrant Articles: Nancy provided the board with a preliminary list of warrant articles, which included the Operating Budget, Contingency Fund for unanticipated expenses, Cemetery Maintenance Fund transfer, Northwood Lake Watershed Association appropriation, Water District Expansion reserve fund appropriation, Town Office reserve fund appropriation, Fire Department radios, adding a full-time firefighter/paramedic/AEMT position to the Fire Department, reconstruction and improvement to the town roads appropriation, highway vehicle and equipment reserve fund appropriation, bridge replacement reserve fund appropriation, and highway dump truck purchase.

Nancy explained the contingency fund, stating it allows the town to set aside funds for unanticipated expenses during the year without having to hold a special town meeting. These are funds used from the fund balance and if there isn't an emergency no funds are spent.

Virginia stated she did not want to include the milfoil warrant article without the town being asked.

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Nancy stated the additional position for the Fire Department would not start until March and only includes a partial salary amount. The Fire Chief is hoping to fill the current vacancy and will bring the department up to six full-time staff members to help with the 24/7 coverage.

Nancy stated the board needs to include a warrant article for the library roof. Virginia asked the office staff to gather additional estimates to replace the office roof and would forward Dawn the information about what is needed for the roof.

Virginia asked if a warrant article was needed to create a commission to start planning Epsom's 300th birthday celebration in 2027. Nancy stated a warrant article isn't needed if only a committee is established; a warrant article will be needed if any funds are made available to the committee. The board would discuss the commission parameters at a future meeting.

Virginia asked to discuss a future town office, for either a new structure or renovating an existing structure. The current reserve fund has \$25,000.00, it will have \$50,000.00 if the 2020 warrant article is approved, and that amount is not going to be enough to start the process. Virginia stated the lease for the current offices ends in 2020 and she is considering suggesting renovations to the Old Town Hall but is concerned about limitations with the historic designation. There are others who also would like to consider using the Old Meetinghouse as well. Virginia stated the board could also consider adding more money into the town office reserve fund.

Cheryl stated if renovations are considered for the Old Town Hall the board will need to consider all aspects, including storage needs. Cheryl expressed her thought that the town should add on to the Old Meetinghouse for office space and using the Meetinghouse for meetings, voting, and the basement area for storage and/or office space.

Virginia suggested a possible warrant article in 2020 for some type of useable space. Cheryl suggested creating a building committee; Virginia stated the town has had one before and would need to create specific parameters for the committee. It was determined the board will need to discuss the matter further to establish what they want to consider for a future town office.

Nancy answered the board questions regarding a proposed town office. There have been multiple committees in the past years with a lot of time spent and a lot of research generated. The committees have come up with multiple versions of buildings and locations, all of which have been rejected by the voters. Voter complaints were expressed in the past over the lack of no specific plans, no specific dollar amount, too many versions, and disagreements about using some of the older structures. General discussion took place about possible warrant article options for town office space. Nancy expressed concern that now is too late in the process to bring forward a 2020 warrant article and voters have objected to receiving options for town office space that have already been rejected.

Cheryl asked how soon the board should start talking to the building owner to extend the lease and stated she would not support strict requirements with a new agreement. Nancy stated some

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of the current contract restrictions were for the owner to recoup some of the money he spent on renovating the space. Nancy stated the board should start considering what they want from the landlord for the existing space after the first of the year and the board should also consider what they want for new town office space.

Virginia asked if the board should consider transitioning the Town Clerk/Tax Collector from an elected position to an appointed position.

Virginia stated Hugh asked if the board wanted to consider adding video cameras for meeting recording as a warrant article. Virginia stated she did not feel comfortable with adding a 2020 warrant article asking for funds when a warrant article was rejected the prior year, and also felt the town should consider other options for video recording. Cheryl agreed that a new warrant article should not be considered and supported seeking alternative options to video board meetings. Cheryl stated the Planning Board is considering the option of receiving plans electronically for a better public display.

General discussion took place about options for video cameras and public display systems. The board would look at available options for videotaping meetings and to also provide the ability for a display of meeting information to the public.

Policy Review: The board considered the need to update town policies. Dawn explained the current policy book has what appears to be both current and older policies and does not know which policies are active. Cheryl and Virginia agreed there is a lot of confusion with the information in the Policy book and a review is needed.

Nancy stated the policy book has been reviewed multiple times and each new policy removes/eliminates the old policy.

After discussion, it was determined Nancy would go through the Policy book and clean out those that are no longer applicable.

2020 Municipal Aid Funds: Virginia asked if a motion was needed to make a decision for the use of the 2020 municipal aid funds. Nancy asked the board to make a motion about how they want the funds to be used.

Nancy reminded the board the funds could also be designated for a specific purchase in a warrant article as offsetting revenue, as well as proposed revenue for the 2020 proposed budget.

Motion by: Virginia to put the 2020 Municipal Aid Funds into the 2020 operating budget as proposed revenue. **Second by:** Cheryl. **Vote:** 2 – 0 in favor.

Public Comment: A citizen, who chose to remain anonymous, asked if the town office would consider going paperless. Virginia stated some efforts are being made to reduce the amount of paper being used in the office, it probably wouldn't happen at the town office soon, but it would

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be something to consider. Cheryl stated the Planning Board is also considering options to reduce paper use.

Concern was also expressed about the Police Department and Police Officers. Virginia stated she holds the police and fire departments to a high standard and will discuss the concern with the Police Chief. If there are specific complaints about the Police Department or officers, it should be put in writing.

Cheryl stated citizens can come to the board with concerns and also recommended putting the concerns in writing, as using the word corruption is a very broad term and can be very damaging without supporting documentation.

The citizen stated she would put her concerns in writing to the board.

Non-Public Session: 7:56 pm Motion by: Cheryl to enter into Non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (1). **Second by:** Virginia.

Roll call vote: Virginia – Aye, Cheryl – Aye.

8:57 pm Motion by Cheryl to exit non-public session and to seal the non-public minutes.

Second by: Virginia. **Vote:** 2 – 0 in favor.

The board made a decision.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by: Cheryl to approve the November 18, 2019, public minutes as amended. **Second by:** Virginia. **Vote:** 2 – 0 in favor.

Selectmen Reports:

Cheryl: The Planning Board was given access and space on the town server for documents relating to, for, and from the Planning Board. The Planning Board Chair is going to work with the Planning Board Secretary to establish a list of duties completed by the Secretary and to make sure documents are saved to the server, and backed up.

The Highway Department received the new truck, but there are a few concerns and some things that were not fixed, and a review of the invoices and repairs will be taking place. The F550 is consistently not operating and continues to need repairs, and if necessary Scott will let the board know what new repair work is needed and impact on his budget.

The Economic Development Committee is going to consider getting volunteers to help with a Beautification Committee.

Cheryl stated the Boy Scouts will have a Christmas Tree lighting on December 14 at 4 pm at Webster Park.

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Virginia: The Historical Society and Friends of the Library are each working toward creating welcome packets, at the same time the board is also considering changes to the town office welcome packet. The board should consider free printing options for the welcome and directory packets, and information that could be included in the lobby.

Dawn asked to keep the information in the town welcome packets separate from other departments and committees, as they are currently mailed to new residents, and there is a wish to reduce the mailing costs. Cheryl agreed the board needed to update the town packet.

The Old Meetinghouse Revitalization Committee will meet next week.

Other Business: Dawn asked the board to consider rescinding the previously approved Webster Park Ordinance and consider adopting what is allowed for activity at the park as a town policy. The board would consider approving the town policy before rescinding the ordinance.

Correspondence – FYI: Dawn stated the board received updates to the Comcast cable offerings, a nice letter about the fire department staff, renewal of the town prime insurance membership, and an abutter notice from Strafford about the installation of a cell tower.

Adjourn the Meeting

9:46 PM Motion by Cheryl to adjourn the meeting. Second by: Virginia. Vote: 2 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Calley-Murdough