

**TOWN OF EPSOM
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
December 23, 2019 AT 5:00 PM**

Hugh Curley
Virginia Drew
Cheryl Gilpatrick

Approved: **Hugh / Cheryl**
Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Staff Present: Nancy Wheeler, Dawn Calley-Murdough

Other Attendees: Deb Sargent, Meadow Wysocki

Virginia called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and asked Cheryl to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Virginia reviewed the agenda and no changes were requested.

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

Appointments: None

Signature/Approval Items:

Police Purchase Orders: Server and Generator: Hugh stated he wanted to determine if the generator at the Police Department was the appropriate size needed for the department or if the department should have a different size and style of a generator.

Virginia stated the purchase order is for the recommended repairs provided by Generator Connection and was determined after the maintenance inspections. The town does have an existing maintenance contract between the town and the company. Virginia stated Chief Preve did look into prices from other generator repair companies and indicated the amounts were similar to Generator Connections.

Hugh asked for the Police Department to consider a new generator for the Police Department as he felt the current repairs were too expensive where the town might get a newer generator more appropriately sized for the building and with a warranty. Virginia and Cheryl felt it was something that could be done.

Virginia and Cheryl agreed the purchase order should be signed for the generator repairs.

Highway: Virginia asked about the funds needed for guard rails, as they were very expensive and the purchase order was signed after the guard rail was ordered. Cheryl stated it was a safety issue and the funds came from the Highway Maintenance account.

Police Salary Rates: The board received and agreed with the change from part-time to full time hiring paperwork for Kyle Johansson and also signed the updated pay rate sheet for the new full-time office.

Motion by: Hugh to increase the officer's wage to \$18.00 per hour during his time in the academy, \$18.50 once the academy is completed and during field training, and \$19.00 once field

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training is completed, per the hiring letter from Chief Preve. **Second by:** Cheryl. **Vote:** 3 – 0 in favor.

It was noted in Chief Preve's submission that the amount was already covered for the full time officer in the existing budget.

Assessing Signature/Approval:

Equalization Data Certification Sheet: Cheryl stated she received the backup data sheets used to complete the survey and had some questions regarding a couple of sales in the equalization survey and would contact Tim for answers. Cheryl recommended signing the equalization sheet.

Cheryl stated all residential sales appear to have a lower assessed value compared to the sale price, but there are some anomalies with the commercials sales.

The board signed the Equalization Data Certification Sheet for the 2019 ratio setting process.

Discussion:

Town Clerk/Tax Collector Starting Salary Amount: Virginia stated the board needs to determine a starting salary amount for the new Town Clerk/Tax Collector after they are appointed to serve in the position. It was the opinion of the current Town Clerk/Tax Collector to decrease the starting salary amount as the new person would not be a certified Town Clerk, and takes up to four years to earn that designation.

Hugh stated he contacted a few surrounding towns to ask information about salary amounts of Town Clerk/Tax Collectors, which provided a variety of salary ranges and offered benefits. He reached out for additional information about salary information and benefit information for Town Clerk/Tax Collectors and it should be coming soon to be shared with the other board members.

Virginia stated she understands the concerns of the Budget Committee but also understands the board needs to consider a salary amount for the position and not the person who is in the position. Virginia asked what would happen to the 2021 budget if the board reduced the 2020 salary amount.

Nancy stated the board will set a salary in 2020 but it is a separate issue from their consideration of the 2021 salary amount, as the person they hire may not get elected in 2021. Nancy reminded the board that the proposed 2020 budget includes a salary amount for two people from January to March for the training period.

Cheryl stated she felt if someone with Town Clerk/Tax Collector experience was hired they should start at a higher amount per hour than someone coming into the position without any experience.

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Virginia stated she would rather start the salary rate for the new person less than what the current Town Clerk/Tax Collector is making.

General discussion took place about different salary scenarios and the differences between what the current Town Clerk/Tax Collector has for office hours and the changes the new person could make. The board was reminded the Town Clerk/Tax Collector has control over the number of hours they work, per statute.

After discussion the board determined they are comfortable with a starting salary range between \$20.00 and \$22.00 per hour for 35 hours a week, with a bi-weekly salary amount of \$1,540.00, depending on the experience of the incoming person.

The board agreed to lower the salary rate in the budget to \$1540.00 per pay period and agreed they would consider the actual starting rate depending on the experience of the hired person. Interviews would take place on December 27 and an agenda for the board would be posted as all three board members would try to attend.

Federal Salary Changes and Proposed Salary Change: Virginia stated there is one employee impacted by the recent federal overtime salary changes, and expressed concern about the potential liability with the potential salary impact of requiring the employee to track his hours and pay over time.

Cheryl stated it was her understanding based on the end of a prior non-public session the board made a decision regarding the matter to increase the salary amount.

Discussion took place about how the board wanted to fund the position, either increase the salary amount or have the employee track their hours. It was stated the employee would need to separate their work duties between the volunteer hours versus administrative duties, and the board could be required to complete an audit of that time. Discussion also took place about the future and how things could change if and when a new person might be in the position. The board agreed in order to hire a new employee may require additional increases to the salary amount.

Hugh stated he has the opinion to increase the salary amount. It was stated the approximate amount of an additional \$7,000.00 per year would be needed. Cheryl agreed to increase the annual salary amount.

Discussion took place about the different job duties for the employee and potential complications of how the NH Department of Labor might audit the hours for what is considered exempt.

Hugh felt the board was making a good faith effort to meet the requirements of all laws.

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Nancy asked the board to consider how they will fund the new salary amount if the town receives the default budget in 2020. After discussion, the board decided there should be available funds in the department budgets to account for the salary adjustment.

All board members agreed they were concerned about needing to find the funds, whether they increase the salary amount or asking the employee to track their hours and pay overtime hours. Virginia stated she was uncomfortable setting an amount where the board may possibly need to find the funds in another account if the default budget is passed.

The board agreed they would talk to the employee to determine how they would move forward.

Mitchell Group Request: Virginia stated she held over the discussion from the prior meeting to receive Hugh's opinion.

Hugh suggested the town stay with the Mitchell Group for legal representation. Cheryl and Virginia agreed with the decision.

Selectmen Reports: None

Public Comments:

Deb asked if the Highway Department was building a new building and/or salt shed. Cheryl stated the department is building a roof over the resident sand pile and is also building a hanger section for town truck sanding equipment. Materials were used from the demolished Care Pharmacy building. The sandpile also moved with these changes, which required a move of the department gate. Deb stated she heard a complaint about the new construction is on the property of a different owner. Cheryl stated she would verify the location of the construction of the new building but felt the location was on town property.

Other Business: Nancy informed the board the 2018 audit report was available for review. It was in the board meeting box for their review at any time.

Virginia stated she would attend the January 7, 2020, Budget Meeting but would need Cheryl to sit in as her back up on January 14, 2020.

The board clarified they would meet January 6, 2020, in addition to their regularly scheduled meetings.

Dawn clarified she was able to negotiate the cost and services for the three town copiers in 2020 and the cost and services would remain the same as in 2019.

Adjourn the Meeting

6:17 PM Motion by: Cheryl to adjourn the meeting. Second by: Hugh. Vote: 3 – 0 in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Calley-Murdough