

TOWN OF EPSOM
BUDGET COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 5, 2019

Present: Marylou LaFleur-Keane, Chairman; Joni Kitson, Vice Chairman; Gary Kitson, Water District Representative; Len Gilman; Virginia Drew, Selectmen's Representative; Bill Yeaton, School Board Representative; Mary Frambach; Linda Hodgdon; Penny Graham; Joyce Heck

Not in Attendance: Meadow Wysocki; Tony Soltani

Other Attendees: Nancy Wheeler; Robert Paine; Celeste Decker; Nancy Claris; Cheryl Gilpatrick; Wayne Preve; Scott Elliott; Gary Perry

Marylou opened the meeting at 6:32 PM.

Webinar information regarding recycling to be presented by NHMA was given to the members.

Library – Robert Paine

Mr. Paine reviewed the number of programs offered by the Library and other groups that also use the Library. He noted that it is used as a community center.

Mr. Paine reviewed the proposed 2020 Library budget. Mr. Paine noted that the book budget has usually been increased 10% for the last 9 or 10 years. It was not increased for 2020. He noted that the books are costing approximately the same as 2019.

One hour a week was added to the cleaning costs for cleaning at the Old Library Building.

Penny asked what was being purchased for fixtures for \$4,000.00. Mr. Paine noted that in 2019 it was used for a new security system. The line was overspent \$933.00 in 2019. There are no specific plans for purchases from this line in 2020.

Linda asked what the building maintenance costs would be for 2020. Mr. Paine noted interior painting.

Gary asked what items were replaced. Mr. Paine noted two windows and the exterior meeting room doors. Some toilets were also replaced. Mr. Paine noted that items are needing to be replaced as the building ages.

Mr. Paine noted the salaries of the Library personnel. He noted that the salaries are low

compared to other towns. He noted that the trustees are requesting another fifty cents an hour increase for the employees. Penny asked how salaries were increased with a default budget. Mr. Paine noted that they gave a fifty cent an hour increases about the middle of the year. He noted that it did not affect the bottom line of the budget. He discussed the potential salary of a replacement when the Library Director retires. He felt it would have to increase from what the current director's salary is now.

Gary asked if they have a pay scale for the positions. Virginia noted that if there are default budgets pay scales cannot work. Gary discussed that when a new person is hired there should be a structure. Virginia noted it is a concern if there are several years of default budgets. Gary asked what a new hire is told. Nancy Wheeler explained that they are told that they might be paid the same as what they are currently paid.

Gary noted that is a difficult thing when hiring a police officer or a para-med. Virginia noted that the Board of Selectmen will have to come to a determination regarding salaries.

Mr. Paine noted other items are fixed. He noted that the Friends of the Library are awesome with assisting if needed.

Marylou noted they have to make a motion due to the revised budget. The items to be revised were discussed.

Virginia motioned to amend the Library Management Services Line (01-4550.1-680) to \$94,310.00 which is a decrease of \$2,175, Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed with 2 abstentions.

It was discussed that the Library budget should follow the same format as other departments. Nancy noted in the past it was one lump sum as the Library pays their own bills, etc. except payroll which is now handled by the Town Office.

It was discussed that the health insurance, etc. lines have been revised due to plans chosen by employees. Linda noted that the budget was reduced by 2.3%.

Police Department – Chief Wayne Preve

Chief Preve noted cuts he made in his budget. He noted he did not make the 3% cut requested by the Budget Committee. He could make further cuts, but would like to keep the salaries the same as budgeted for 2020. He noted the cuts he did make.

Originally the total amount of a new vehicle and equipment (Line 01-4210.1-750) was reduced by \$10,000.00 to \$32,000.00.

The Part Time Officer Line (01-4210.2-150) was reduced by \$7,190.00 leaving \$10.00 in the line. Chief Preve noted he cannot find part-time officers. If he does hire a part time officer the Town has to purchase them equipment including uniforms, bullet proof vest,

tazar, etc. He noted that it is difficult to have them come to work after they have worked at their full-time position. Chief Preve hopes to be up to full staff by June or July.

The Dispatch Line (01-4210.1-343) can be reduced by an additional \$500.00 to \$26,500.00; this is a contract item.

Chief Preve had increased the Gasoline Line (01-4210.1-635) \$1,000.00. It can be decreased by the \$1,000.00. Len questioned this reduction suggesting the line remain the same. The unknown of gas costs was discussed. It was determined to not make this cut.

The Court and Motor Vehicle Hearings Line (01-4210.1-121) may be cut to \$9,500.00.

Chief Preve discussed he did not want to deplete the detail fund so he had funds if there were required maintenance repairs not included in the budget.

The Overtime Line was used extensively as the department was running with just 4 officers. As he plans on more officers this year it may be cut by \$1,000.00.

Linda asked if there were any other funds outside of the budget and detail funds. There are not any other funds.

Len asked about retaining new officers. Chief Preve noted at his previous job the new officer had field training with more than one officer which created some issues as each officer develops their own style. Chief Preve noted the new officer is doing a good job. He noted that he came from Concord where he started at \$55,000.00. In Epsom he is making \$19.00/hour with the Chief wanting to increase the salary to \$19.50/hour. Virginia asked the typical work week. It is 43 hours a week with no overtime until after the officer works the 43 hours.

Gary motioned to reduce the Dispatch Line (01-4210.1-343) BY \$500.00 to \$26,500.00, Linda seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Len motioned to decrease The Vehicle Line (01-4210.1-760) by \$5,000 to \$37,000.00, Joyce seconded the motion.

Mary asked if the funds would include money to outfit the cruisers. Chief Preve noted it does. He discussed that Ford changed the design for the Explorers so the existing equipment will not fit.

The motion passed with a vote of 8 yes and 2 no.

Joni motioned to reduce the Court and Motor Hearings Line (01-4210.1-121) by \$500.00; Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Virginia motioned to decrease the Overtime Line (01-4210.1-140) by \$1,000.00 to \$24,000.00; Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Virginia motioned to decrease the Part Time Officers Line (01-4210.1-150) down to **\$10.00; Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

The total decrease for the Police Department Budget is \$14,190.00.

Gary asked what building repairs were to be completed. Chief Preve noted that the MRI report thought the officers should not be mowing or shoveling snow. The department has hired Scott Collins at \$112.00/month to complete these duties.

Also, the report suggested not to have the officers clean the station, etc. He plans to hire someone this year to do this once a month.

Chief Preve noted the proposed costs for a new server are \$20,000.00.

They have redone the booking and interview rooms and added new cameras in the evidence room. Chief Preve noted it was \$19,000.00 to go live with dispatch.

Chief Preve noted other items he added or replaced this year. He noted the cost of uniforms (\$60.00 each for shirts and pants). He discussed trainings that have to be completed each year.

Chief Preve had included \$3.00/hour for raises. He discussed the amount of work the officers have completed.

Virginia noted her original motion at the Board of Selectmen for salaries was \$2.00/hour with it being reduced to \$1.00/hour. She noted that the officers work very hard for the Town.

Gary noted that in a past year the Budget Committee included raises for the Officers with the Selectmen not granting them.

Len asked about repair costs. Chief Preve noted they are high. The cost was discussed for repairing the generator.

Joyce asked for the duties of the Administrative Assistant. Chief Preve noted she answers the phone, dispatches, completes billing, court filings and officer reports. Chief Preve noted she does a good job. She works 40 hours a week.

Linda thanked Chief Preve for the work that they do.

Parks - Gary Perry

Marylou asked if members had any general questions.

Penny asked about the electric costs. Mr. Perry noted there are some additional lights

with a small electric heater in the concession stand.

Virginia noted that groundskeeping is the largest expense. Mr. Perry discussed the items that the maintenance company completes.

Virginia asked the costs for the port-a-potties, Nancy noted that it is \$105.00/month. Virginia noted that there are not any at the swimming hole. Mr. Perry discussed that if there is one there it creates more State requirements that would be costly to maintain.

Penny asked when the port-a-potties are serviced. Mr. Perry indicated twice a month.

Virginia noted that Gary and his group do a lot of work at the park. Penny asked if they would be doing the skating rink this year. Gary indicated no due to the amount of work. He noted a tree lighting ceremony will be December 14 at the park sponsored by the Boy Scouts.

Penny asked about the house that they had acquired several years ago. Mr. Perry noted that the Church has used some of it. He wanted to build a function hall, but it was rejected by the Board of Selectmen.

Joni noted that cuts had been made from last year.

Highway Department – Scott Elliott

Mr. Elliott explained his budget. Originally, he did not give himself a salary increase but the Selectmen added one to his salary. He wanted to give his employee a \$2.00/hour increase. The employee works 4 ten-hour days. Mr. Elliott noted that he comes in additional time and completes other work. The Selectmen reduced the employee's increase to \$1.00/hour with another fifty cent an hour increase after 13 weeks. Mr. Elliott has eliminated the part-time position.

Mr. Elliott plans to also plow next year when they get the additional truck. Mr. Elliott noted he is changing the way snowplowing is completed. He felt the subcontractors are awesome.

He noted he is increasing the culverts line to replace several culverts.

Mr. Elliott discussed bridges he plans to replace in the future (Center Hill Road over the Little Suncook River and replace a culvert on Swamp Road with a box culvert).

Mr. Elliott reduced the Highway Maintenance Line (01-4312.4-430) by \$55,000.00. He discussed that work is being completed by the department rather than hiring subcontractors. The department has rented equipment to complete some of the work.

He thought grading would be less in 2020 as they were aggressive this year with the work completed. He discussed the plan to use a paving machine for installing gravel on gravel

roads. It will save the town money.

Mr. Elliott noted he would be striping both New Orchard and North Roads once the paving is completed. Virginia asked if Goboro Road would be striped, Mr. Elliott indicted no.

He discussed the equipment he plans to rent to complete the various projects.

Mr. Elliott noted he wanted to grind and pave North Pembroke Road with the funds to come from the Capital Reserve Funds.

Mr. Elliott reduced the Salt and Sand Line (01-4312.4-440) as he is using sand to treat roads with the salt rather than stone. It is cheaper to purchase. He noted that it is a difficult line to determine due to the weather. He discussed calculating costs for each storm.

Linda questioned the telephone expense. Nancy explained that there was a one-time cost for the new telephone system.

Mr. Elliott noted there are transmission issues with the Explorer. Gary noted there have been issues for several years with that vehicle.

Mr. Elliott noted that he is submitting a Warrant Article for a new F 550.

Len verified the items to be covered by the Vehicle Maintenance Line 01-4312.6-430). Len questioned if there were enough funds in the maintenance line.

Mr. Elliott noted that the brakes in the back hoe will cost \$6,200.00 to replace. Mary questioned if it was worth it to repair the back hoe, Mr. Elliott indicated it was. He does not take it out of the yard. He noted that he rents equipment as needed.

Mr. Elliott discussed the General Supplies for Road Crew (01-4312.6-610). He discussed the workers appreciated a hot meal on cold days that he purchases once a week.

He discussed the difficulty in determining diesel fuel and gasoline. Linda questioned if there was enough money in the gasoline line as he has overspent the line this year. Len thought they should increase the gasoline and may want to increase the diesel line also. He thought the gasoline line to between \$3,500 to \$3,800.00.

Mr. Elliott noted that if he gets a new F 550, he plans to keep the old truck for his use. He noted that there are not many big repairs left to be completed on it.

Len motioned to increase the Gasoline Fuel Line (01-4312.6-640) to \$4,000.00, Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Len discussed the diesel costs. Joni noted that \$5449.00 has been spent so far this year.

Mr. Elliott noted the truck has not be available for about 7 weeks. Gary noted in 2018 the cost was \$6,738.00 for diesel fuel.

Mr. Elliott had increased Department Operating Supplies (01-4312.6-680) by \$400.00, but could reduce this to the 2019 amount.

Gary motioned to decrease the Department Operating Supplies (01-4312.6-680) by \$400.00, Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Elliott reviewed the uniform costs (01-4312.6-681). He noted the cost for the various items having reduced the line by \$200.00.

Mr. Elliott noted under Equipment Purchases (01-4312.6-690) he wanted to purchase a compactor. He could remove \$1,000.00 from this line. It was determined to leave the line as is.

Mr. Elliott increased the Heat and Oil Line (01-4312.7-411) by \$600.00 based on the past usage.

Mr. Elliott lowered the Building Repairs and Maintenance Line (01-4312.7-430) by \$2,800.00. He plans to construct additional salt storage facility so he may get larger deliveries at a cost of approximately \$3,000.00. This would allow for \$2,000.00 for unforeseen items.

It was discussed the Center Hill Road bridge (over the Little Suncook River) will have work completed. Scott noted that until the pavement is removed, he does not know what the repair costs will be.

Mr. Elliott noted he has purchased hand tools that the Department did not have.

Mr. Elliott was thanked for his presentation.

Len discussed an issue he had with the Library spending \$23,000.00 for purchasing books.

Linda noted it is a wonderful Library and she hears this from other towns also. The trust fund and other non-lapsing funds for the library were discussed. Len asked what money was returned from the Library, no one knew.

Gary noted that the Town Clerk/Tax Collector is leaving. He questioned the Deputy being certified and why isn't she training the new person. It was discussed. Linda noted that the Selectmen are making decisions that are the best for the town.

Gary reviewed a wage chart that he completed. He noted that the figures included in the budget are not matching the hourly figures given to the Committee. He noted that he completed calculations based on the 2019 budget. He noted that some employees are

receiving a larger increase than the fifty cent an hour increase. Virginia noted the concerns should be discussed with the Finance Officer.

There was a discussion if the elected position of Town Clerk should receive the salary in the budget after the March election. Virginia will check on this.

Minutes of December 3, 2019

The minutes of December 3, 2019 were reviewed and amended.

Mary motioned to approve the minutes of December 3, 2019 as amended, Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

Len discussed that the proposed BCEP budget will be increased by \$125,000.00 for 2020 with 2021 increase to be \$134,000.00. Len discussed that each town has a Selectmen's representative and another representative. He noted that the town's representatives do not have to participate but the Town still has to pay the costs assessed to it.

Joni motioned to adjourn; Len seconded the motion. The motion passed. Marylou adjourned the meeting at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary