

TOWN OF EPSOM
BUDGET COMMITTEE
JANUARY 9, 2020

Present: Marylou LaFleur-Keane, Chairman; Joni Kitson, Vice Chairman; Gary Kitson, Water District Representative; Len Gilman; Cheryl Gilpatrick, Filling in as Selectmen's Representative; Mary Frambach; Linda Hodgdon; Joyce Heck; Meadow Wysocki; Tony Soltani; Bill Yeaton, School Board Representative; Penny Graham

Not in Attendance: Virginia Drew, Selectmen's Representative

Other Attendees: Peter Warburton; Christine Vayda; Patrick Connors; Hugh Curley; Nancy Wheeler; Robin Donovan; Linda Valley

Marylou opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

School Budget

Marylou asked if the School Personnel present had the reductions made to the budget.

Bill asked how the cut was determined. Len and Marylou explained that they used the wording from the School Board meeting where the funds for the additional Full Day Kindergarten were added to the budget. Bill asked since the School Board has not voted on the reduction how would it show on the Warrant. It was discussed if the School Board would have a chance to revote on the new budget number. Marylou will contact DRA to determine how/when the School Board would be able to vote on the adjusted budget.

Len asked if money left over from the 2018/2019 budget was returned to the Town as surplus. It is used to offset the following year's taxes. For the 2018/2019 year there was \$199,000.00.

Linda noted the difference between the School District default budget and the presented budget (\$24,000.00). Meadow asked if the tax impact for the default budget is shown on the ballot; it is not shown.

Linda asked if the School District thought they would exceed the 35-36 children in kindergarten classes next year. Mr. Connors thought they probably would.

Tony did not see the offset of the surplus budget in this year's budget. Nancy explained that it was used in October as revenue when the December 2019 tax rate was set.

The School personnel who attended the meeting were thanked for attending.

Town Budget

Nancy presented the revenues to the Committee explaining the Revenue Sheet.

Account 3120 – Current Use Tax - Linda asked about the difference in the 2019 actual and 2020 projected current use tax. Nancy explained that the tax is a change in value for the land that comes out of current use. Nancy noted that in 2019 there was a lot of property that came out of current use. It is projected less land would be removed from current use in 2020.

Account 3351 – Shared Revenue Block Grant - Meadow asked what these funds were. Nancy noted that the State had additional funds and shared the money with the municipalities; the Town will also have a payment next year.

Account 3401 – Police Reports - Tony asked what Police Reports funds were; Nancy noted it was revenue for copies of Police Reports, etc. requested by the public or insurance companies.

Account 3506 – Revenue From W/C Insurance – Meadow asked what this payment was from; Nancy noted it would be revenue from various insurance payments.

Account 3509 – Income From Franchise Services - Linda asked what this was; Nancy noted revenue from the cable company franchise fees.

Account 3230 – Building Permits – Nancy noted that there were many building permits issued in 2019 that may not be requested in 2020. She discussed the various subdivisions that were constructed in 2019 as well as the decks, porches and additions that required permits.

Account 3210 – Food Service License Fees - Len asked about the food inspections. Nancy noted those lines should be deleted as the Town is no longer self inspecting for food service facilities. It is now completed by the State.

Marylou reviewed the items that were decreased in the budget at the last meeting. Nancy also calculated the costs for the hired Town Clerk/Tax Collector Lines \$4,123 for each line at \$22.00/hour. Other lines would also be adjusted, i.e. FICA, MEDI, etc.

Meadow motioned to amend the appropriate lines to reduce the Town Clerk/Tax Collector by a total of \$9,800.00; Gary seconded the motion. The motion passed with 9 yes, 1 no and 1 abstention.

Marylou noted under Personnel Administration the various insurance lines (Health Insurance, Elected Health Insurance, Dental Insurance and Section 125 Pre Tax Benefit could be reduced a total of 17,143.00.

Gary motioned to reduce Line 01-4155.2-210 - Health Insurance; Line 01-4155.2-211 -Elected Health Insurance; Line 01-4155.2-212 - Dental Insurance and Line 01-4155.2-290 - Sec 125 Pretax Benefit by a total of \$17,143.00; Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Marylou noted they had completed \$42,940.00 in net decreases.

Joni noted from reading the Selectmen minutes of Dec 16, 2019 the Conservation Commission received a \$47,000.00 LCHIP Grant; \$10,000.00 Bear Paw Grant and a \$10,000.00 gift. She asked if that figure was correct – there was only two discussed during the discussion on Tuesday. It was determined that the Commission received three funds.

It was discussed that the Selectmen could not change the bottom line of a budget voted on in March, but could move money around on the lines.

Linda asked about Workers Comp (01-4155.2-260) budgeted at \$37,000.00 as only \$20,000.00 was used in 2019. Nancy noted in 2019 Primex had a surplus and returned money to the municipalities that had insurance with them.

Len asked which was more important; to have money in the budget and turn money back or have a budget that should be lower? Tony felt the numbers on the pages do not add up. Joyce noted he could make a motion to cut lines if he wanted. Len asked if they could go through the budget page by page again.

01-4130.1-315 – Professional Services – Tony asked what the line was for. Cheryl did not know what the line was for, she indicated Nancy would have to be asked. Nancy explained the funds were to hire a firm to do actuarial services. It could be for an engineer, accountant, MRI studies, consultants, someone who does not fit on other lines. Gary asked what the \$2,300.00 had been spent on; Nancy noted for the actuary to complete a report on the government accounting.

Len asked if anything was anticipated for this year. Joni asked about receiving grant amounts over a certain amount that required additional auditing. Linda reviewed the figures used for the last five years from this line.

01-4130.1-341 – Telephone - Tony asked about these costs; Mary noted that the Town had to change services in 2019.

Linda noted the Postage (01-4130.1-625) could be reduced to \$1,000.00. It was discussed with Nancy noted that she runs reports from the Postage Meter periodically.

Len clarified the previous vote for the salary of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector.

Len motioned to drop the salary for the new Town Clerk/Tax Collector be a maximum of \$20.00 an hour; Tony seconded the motion.

Cheryl noted the Selectmen would have to discuss it; she noted that the person accepted the position with a previous discussion of the salary to be increased to a maximum of \$22.00 an hour. Marylou noted that it is not for the Budget Committee to set salaries. It was discussed the current salary is for a training period. Len thought \$22.00 an hour was a large increase.

Tony noted that the only requirement the Town Clerk needed was to be bonded. It was noted that there was training from the State. Marylou reiterated the Committee does not set salaries. It was discussed the position would be elected in March 2021.

Len noted that the Selectmen presented a budget and it was up to the Committee to make recommendations on the salary. Cheryl felt it was irresponsible since the Selectmen gave the Committee a salary range figure.

Len indicated that anyone could run for the position and would be paid the amount in the budget in the future. Nancy clarified this year the Town Clerk/Tax Collector is hired now and will be an elected official in March 2021.

Tony asked Hugh for his thoughts. Hugh indicated that he could not participate in the meeting as it had not been posted as a Selectmen's meeting.

Len rescinded the motion and Tony his second.

Mary motioned to reduce Line 01-4153.1-320 – Legal Departmental Operations - by \$3,000.00 to \$17,000.00; Gary seconded the motion.

Cheryl noted that the Town does have litigation. Joni asked if the cases are covered by insurance. Tony noted they could cut it down to nothing. Mary noted that they spent \$15,410.00 in 2019.

Linda asked if the pending litigation is covered by insurance, Nancy noted all the current cases are covered.

The motion passed.

Mary motioned to reduce Line 01-4312.2-430 - Highway /Street Maintenance - by \$5,000.00; Meadow seconded the motion.

Joyce noted the amounts spent in the past. Joni noted the Road Agent is new and gave a detailed list of what he would be spending on each line and what it would be for.

Mary withdrew the motion; Meadow withdrew the second.

Cheryl noted he did move the paving of North Pembroke Road already.

Len motioned to reduce Line 01-4312.6-635 - Fuel & Diesel - by \$500.00; Meadow seconded the motion.

Joni noted that the Town now has a diesel vehicle.

The motion passed.

Pg.1 – Professional Services

Meadow motioned to reduce Line 01-4130.1-315 – Professional Services – by \$1,000.00 to \$3,000.00; Len seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

Meadow motioned to reduce Line 01-4611.2-690 – Land Management - by \$500.00 to \$1,000.00; Len seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

Gary asked about the Conservation Mapping, Meadow explained they have to redo the trail maps due to the acquisition of the 190 acres.

Len motioned to drop Line 01-4520,5-430 - Repairs – Parks/Recreation - by \$275.00 to \$2,000.00; Joni seconded the motion.

The motion passed.

Len asked what the Emergency Management Training (01-4290.1-370) was for; Marylou noted it was for a table top exercise. Len asked about Line Item 01-4290.1-682 – Equipment Purchase asking what he planned to purchase. Mary noted he had discussed adding an additional telephone line to connect the school to the Emergency Management system.

Penny arrived at 8:22 PM

Pg. 8 – PD Dispatch

Tony discussed the increase in Line 01-4210,1-343 - Dispatch, noting that nothing has changed. He did not understand the difference between the \$23,380.00 spent in 2019 and the \$26,500.00 budgeted for 2020. He thought there was a cushion with no change.

Marylou noted the figures were presented by the Police Chief.

Tony motioned to reduce the Dispatch Line (01-4210,1-343) to \$25,000.00; Len seconded the motion.

Linda asked where the numbers came from, Marylou noted from the Chief's handout.

The motion failed with a vote of 4 yes, 6 nos and 2 abstentions.

Joyce motioned to reduce the Dispatch Line (01-4210,1-343) by \$1,000.00 to \$25,500.00; Linda seconded the motion.

Len asked if she was concerned over \$500.00, Joyce was concerned.

The motion passed by a vote of 9 yes, 1 no and 2 abstention

Pg. 9 1-635

Tony discussed the Police Department Gasoline Line (01-4210.1-635) being budgeted at \$19,000.00.

Tony motioned to reduce the Gasoline Line (01-4210.1-635) by \$4,000.00 to \$15,000.00; Len seconded the motion.

Tony noted that the Town has 5 officers with 4 vehicles. He noted that 2 of the vehicles go home with the officers. Tony noted that the coverage does not change with the additional 2 officers.

Joyce noted the most spent on gasoline since 2015 was \$14,706.00. Tony discussed the staffing costs. He discussed the shuffling of funds via lines. He noted the overtime hours worked by one person. He questioned if they need that kind of money for coverage. He felt we are getting double coverage. He felt we are paying high costs for coverage. He did not think the Department would get to \$18,000.00 or \$19,000.00 for gasoline costs used.

Cheryl noted in the last year we did not have the two new officers. It was discussed that there was 24-hour coverage. Meadow noted that in the previous years we did not have double coverage at busy times. Tony felt in a town of 4400 people we do not need double coverage.

Len asked Tony to rescind his motion and reduce the line to \$15,500.00. Tony would not compromise. Penny thought it would be good to go in the middle.

The motion failed by a vote of 1 yes, 10 nos and 1 abstention.

Mary motioned to reduce the Gasoline Line (01-4210.1-635) to \$17,000.00; Joyce seconded the motion.

The motion passed by a vote of 8 yes, 3 nos and 1 abstention.

Gary motioned to reduce the Highway Department Equipment Purchase Line (01-4312.6-690) by \$1,000.00 to \$5,000.00; Meadow seconded the motion.

Gary thought that if the Department needed more funds by the end of the year the Selectmen would let it move funds.

The motion passed by a vote of 9 Yes, 3 Nos and 1 abstention.

Len noted he did not vote for the reduction as he thought the maintenance line was light and he was not comfortable with playing around with the money. We have purchased a truck and it concerns him.

Tony motioned to reduce the Police Department Full/Time Positions (01-4210.2-10) Line by \$22,536.00 to \$254,305.00; Len seconded the motion.

Marylou noted the salaries included an additional pay period. Penny also asked the raise amount for the officers in 2020, it is \$1.00 per hour.

Len asked if we could look at the numbers, he noted we have 2 more officers. He understood what Tony was trying to do; if the payroll line was cut other lines would also be reduced. It was discussed.

Tony noted the salaries paid last year and what will be paid this year. Linda noted a pay period would be \$9,780.00 for 6 officers. The additional pay period would be roughly \$10,000.00. Linda verified that there is no cushion in the line.

The motion failed by a vote of 1 yes, 10 nos, 1 abstention.

The Committee completed its review of the Town Budget.

Mary suggested that no Budget Committee meetings be scheduled on the same night as School Board meetings.

Marylou noted that Bill is here as the School Board Representative, he is not required to be present for the Town Budget. Nine members are here as Town Budget Committee members.

Tony noted all representatives from the various boards are allowed to vote. Gary noted that he will look at the RSA. Len noted they are voting members. Marylou noted she was told that there should be an odd number on the committee, but this is how Epsom has always done it.

Minutes of January 7, 2020

The minutes of January 7, 2020 were reviewed and amended.

Meadow motioned to approve the minutes of January 9, 2020 as amended, Mary seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Marylou reviewed what would be occurring at Tuesday's public hearings. Tony suggested that a plan be available for a change of venue if more residents attend the hearing than the room could accommodate.

Penny asked who would be refiling for vacant positions. Marylou, Tony and Len are up for reelection. The filing period is from January 22 to 31. Filing may also be completed by e-mail except for the last day.

Meadow motioned to adjourn; Len seconded the motion. The motion passed. Marylou adjourned the meeting at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary