

TOWN OF EPSOM
BUDGET COMMITTEE
JANUARY 12, 2021

Present: Marylou LaFleur-Keane, Chairman; Joni Kitson, Vice Chairman; Gary Kitson, Water District Representative; Virginia Drew, Selectmen's Representative; Meadow Wysocki; Joy Sheehan; Penny Graham; Mary Frambach; Joyce Heck; Len Gilman; Brian O'Sullivan, School Board Representative

Virtual: Linda Hodgdon

Not in Attendance:

Other Attendees:

Marylou opened the meeting at 6:35 PM.

Epsom Village District

Gary discussed the Water District budget noting there will be no increase in fees for the customers. He discussed they had unanticipated costs due to an accident. He noted the testing costs and postage costs. He stated there was a previously agreed upon 3% increase in the Service Agreement.

Linda asked what was paid for professional fees. Gary noted before the District took over the billing and finance the auditing was more time consuming. Gary discussed they are looking at new software that would do the billing and meter reading together.

Marylou discussed the only Warrant Article for the Committee will be #5. She also requested that members keep the reports given to them tonight.

Minutes of January 7, 2021

The minutes of January 7, 2021 were reviewed and amended.

Meadow motioned to approve the minutes of January 7, 2021 as amended, Joni seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Len asked if the expansion of the water system would be for the existing Water District or would it be a separate district. Gary indicated it could be either way.

Town Budget

Marylou asked if there were any further revisions on the Town budget.

Mary noted she is not happy with the additional \$2,000 cut from the Library budget and would like the additional .50/hour increase returned to the Police Officers salary.

Penny asked if there was any further correspondence from the Library. Virginia had a conversation with Bob Paine regarding the Library budget. Gary discussed that they have an additional \$5,000 to add to the new Library Director's salary. Len discussed they have a decrease on the amount they originally presented.

Meadow explained they more appropriately allocated the salary lines. She noted the funds removed by the Committee were from the book line and they do have the contingency funds if necessary.

Gary noted they are gaining an employee. Meadow noted the people going to part time are only reducing the hours to 24 per week rather than 35 hours a week.

Brian agreed a Library is essential as it is important for people learning. Brian thought they would be working hard to get a new person. He felt they should have the funds to make it work.

Len reiterated they did not cut the budget, but took funds from the labor line. Brian felt they were not asking for a large increase.

Mary motioned to return the \$2,000 to the Library Management Services (Line 4550680), Virginia seconded the motion.

Joy asked if there was an issue with using the fund for purchasing books. Marylou noted income earned from Library funds is able to be spent during the year. The amount in the fund was discussed with Marylou indicating they have not taken any funds from the fund in the past. Joni noted they had money in 2020 as they had limited programs. She believed they would have limited programs for the beginning of 2021. The issues were discussed.

The motion failed by a vote of 6 no's, 4 yes and 2 abstentions.

Mary motioned to add .50/hour to the Police Department Full Time Wages (Line 4212110) and the PD Chief Wages (Line 4211110) to increase the salaries of the officers and Chief as the Chief requested, Meadow seconded the motion.

Len verified the Chief's salary was included for the increase.

Joy verified that the Selectmen included a .50/hour increase with the Chief requesting a \$1.00/hour increase for the officers. Virginia felt the officers deserved as much as an increase as the Town could afford. She noted that the salaries had been increased by \$1.00/hour last year; and other departments received .50/hour. It would also have to be

explained to the other employees and taxpayers. Virginia noted she was also trying to include the sick leave pay funds as indicated in the existing Employee Handbook. Len noted the Police and Fire Departments are essential and important. They should not lose the existing sick leave benefit but be able to keep it.

Marylou noted the amounts coming from the undesignated fund, the revenues are down and we do not know what will be happening with the school. Marylou noted there was also retirement, etc. that would have to be added if the salaries were increased.

The use of the sick leave and the payment for not using 288 hours of sick leave given the 3 days of pay was discussed. Linda asked about the grandfathering of the funds for the officers would it be just for this year or continue going forward. Virginia does not know as the Selectmen have not voted on it. Linda agrees that the officers thought it was there and it is not right to take it away from them.

The motion failed by a vote of 10 no's, 1 yes and 1 abstention.

There was no further discussion on the Town Budget.

Warrant Articles

Virginia noted the only changes the Selectmen made were for Articles 13 and 14. They added the wording the electric hoist was for the Hose Tower and removed the model of truck.

Virginia noted there was a petition warrant article submitted to the office today for the Legislative redistricting. Penny asked if other towns are doing it also. Virginia did not know.

Linda asked about the tax increase on the warrant articles if they all passed. The Town portion of the tax rate would increase by .30/thousand over last year.

Marylou will have the Warrant Articles posted for the public hearing on Thursday.

Marylou asked for one person to make the motions to recommend the Warrant Articles and one to second them. Meadow volunteered to make the motions with Mary willing to second them.

Virtual meeting regulations and how the public hearing will be conducted were discussed.

Meadow motioned to adjourn; Joy seconded the motion. The motion passed. Marylou adjourned the meeting at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary