

TOWN OF EPSOM
BUDGET COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 17, 2019

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

Not in Attendance: Tony Soltani; Bill Yeaton, School Board Representative

Other Attendees: Nancy Wheeler; Cheryl Gilpatrick; Jay Hickey; Pat Hickey; Rick Bilodeau; Kathy Desroches

Marylou opened the meeting at 6:41 PM.

Welfare

Mrs. Hickey presented the Welfare Officer's budget. She noted she had spent more on rents and heat in 2019 than budgeted. She would like to increase the Rents Line (01-4445.2-813) to \$17,000.00 and the Heat and Oil Line (01-4445.2-411) to \$3,000.00.

Gary noted the Telephone Line has been lowered, Mrs. Hickey noted the people can get more minutes for free.

Joni asked about the Mortgage Line, Mrs. Hickey noted it is a guessing game. Linda asked the number of months people are assisted with the mortgages. Mrs. Hickey indicated it is month to month as she works with them on setting up a budget.

Linda asked if they have to be a resident of Epsom. Mrs. Hickey noted they have to be a resident for 30 days. Virginia asked if they have to go to the town they previously lived in for assistance. Mrs. Hickey noted she does contact the other town after she meets with the people.

Gary motioned to raise the Heat & Oil Line (01-4445.2-411) by \$500.00 to \$3,000.00 and the Rents Line (01-4445.02-813) from \$16,700.00 to \$17,000.00, Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Joni noted Pat was doing a good job.

Zoning Compliance Officer

Mr. Hickey noted he has had an issue the last couple of years during busy times. He noted he did have an assistant in the past and would like to include \$500.00 to have a

person in that position. It was noted there is money in the line. Jay would like to have them work 50/hours for training, etc. at \$10.00/hour.

Linda asked what they would need for the job. Mr. Hickey noted the requirements. He noted people often are upset when he discusses violations with them.

It was discussed that Mr. Hickey could pay more if needed for the assistant.

Mr. Hickey noted in 2019 he has \$5,778.00 in revenue. The total revenue since he began the position has been \$393,687.00. Mr. Hickey noted that the ZBA gives people conditions and more people are not following the conditions that he has to ensure are followed. He discussed issues with this. He works with people to get them to meet the conditions. He noted that most people try to meet the regulations and often do not know they are in violation.

Gary asked if there were any big items coming up next year. Jay noted the 500 North Road Realty subdivision is 2/3 completed with the remaining to be completed. He noted that there are 4 or 5 builders concentrating in Epsom.

Gary noted there are Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Jay noted they can be attached or detached. Gary noted that the only regulation is that the owner has to live in one unit. Gary discussed that one contractor discussed with the ZBA the need for handicapped accessories requiring a larger unit.

Jay noted if the members see something during the year and do not understand to call the office and he will attempt to answer. He noted that Kingstowne is for sale.

Penny asked if there was any interest in the Gossville Hotel. Jay noted that not currently. Joni asked if the current resident is interested in purchasing it, Jay noted he is.

Planning Board

Ms. Desroches discussed the decreases the Board made as requested by the Budget Committee. She does not have the updated expenditures for the Board.

Ms. Desroches reviewed the Planning Board budget and decreases made for 2020.

The Secretarial Support Line (01-4191.1-305) was reduced to \$700.00. The amount required depends upon the number of public hearing required.

The Training and Conferences Line (01-4191.01-370) was reduced to \$225.00. She noted that not a lot of members attended the conference in 2019.

The Filing and Recording Fees (01-4191.01-380) line was reduced to \$300.00. This line also depends upon the number of public hearings and documents that have to be recorded.

The Other Professional Services Line (01-4191.01-390) was reduced to \$400.00. Ms. Desroches noted the Board had a great deal of attorney fees due to a road acceptance issue.

The Postage Line (01-4191.01-625) was reduced to \$800.00; it is metered.

Ms. Desroches noted the Board did not have many applications in 2019; she did not know how many there would be for 2020.

Linda asked about Planning Board revenue; Marylou noted Nancy would give the committee those figures.

Kathy noted they are looking at all forms and possibly increasing fees. Ms. Desroches noted the Regulatory Planning Updates with the CIP to be completed in 2020. Joni noted it also included part of the contract with Reg. Planning.

Linda motioned to reduce the Secretarial Support, Training & Conferences, Filing and Recording Fees, Other Professional Services, and Postage Lines, Joni seconded the motion.

Gary questioned reducing the Training & Conferences Line due to the cost of the annual conference.

Linda modified the motion to reduce the Training & Conferences Line to 240.00 for a reduction in the Planning Board budget by \$560.00 to a budget of \$16,921.00; Joni seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Joni asked about the engineer payments, Kathy noted the fees are paid from escrow accounts.

Emergency Management

Rick Bilodeau, Emergency Management Director, presented the budget. Meadow asked if he had invoices that have not been paid for 2019, Rick indicated he did for Office Supplies (01-4290.1-620) and Printing & Publishing (01-4290.1-6550).

Joni noted there was \$2,000.00 in the Training Line (01-4290.11-370), Rick noted the table top exercise was not done this year due to the telephone system overruns. He plans to hold it next year. It was noted he could not encumber the funds.

Linda asked about the Telephone Line (01-4290.1-341) spending only \$400.00. Rick discussed the new telephone system and the needs per statute. He noted they had 5 lines and now have 4 lines. He hopes to get the school line transferred to the EOC also.

Penny asked if they have a plan for notifying people. Rick noted the school has a system.

He noted that Code RED is expensive.

Linda asked if this is only parents in school or the town; only parents. Linda noted that is a system that reaches small percentage of the Town. Rick discussed the Code Red that would be for landlines only. A special form is required for cell phones.

Joni asked if there is a way to notify residents with cell phones. Rick noted it would be for the entire State.

Rick noted the purchase orders he currently has before the Board of Selectmen:
Equipment Line (01-4290.1-682) - \$1,276.95 for a communication radio; Printing & Publishing (01-4290.1-550) - \$919.60 and Office Supplies (-1-4290.1-620) - \$232.71.
Rick noted that he waits to order items in case there is a disaster.

He noted they have a grant out to replace the generator at the Fire Station (\$32,000+/-). Meadow asked if the grant would cover the costs. Rick discussed it was a 50/50 grant and hoped the new heating system and other work at the Fire Station would cover the matching funds.

Penny discussed the training and asked how he would ensure the training would occur this year. Rick noted that the Selectmen and new Highway Department people would like the training. Penny noted the amount spent in the past. Virginia noted Rick had also had health issues.

Joni noted some Board of Selectmen members need the ICS classes. Rick noted the classes required by officials. Virginia noted this is the first time she has heard of it. Rick noted the Federal people are cracking down as people need to know how to work with the ICS information.

Marylou noted Nancy has completed the 5-year budget and actual expenditures.

Nancy noted the amounts used by different departments for postage as of December 10th:

Planning Board - \$535.00
Zoning Board of Adjustment - \$757.00
Board of Selectmen - \$868,00
Town Clerk - \$1,188.00
Tax Collector - \$2,028.00
Tax Liens - \$1,431.00
Dog Notices - \$585.00

Nancy noted the 5 Year Expenditures are as of this week as the payroll is done for 2019.

Nancy gave the Budget Committee the revenues to date and reviewed the information on the report.

MS737 is what the budget is believed to be in January. MS 4 notes where Town is at in September with this information being used to set tax rate.

Motor Vehicle fees are the town's biggest source of revenue. The Rooms & Meals Tax amount has not changed in several years.

Linda asked about Pistol Permit Fees. Nancy noted that they are no longer required in New Hampshire, but some people still want them.

Nancy noted Tax Deeded Properties. She noted the Selectmen are being more stringent in the last few years. The Town is working with owners on the issues.

Nancy discussed the fees charged the Town by the bank for the checking and other accounts. Nancy noted that money received has to be deposited every day. Meadow asked if the Town has an opportunity to negotiate fees. Nancy indicated no.

The income from Franchise Services (Cable) has not increased over the years. The payment has decreased from what the Town had received in the past.

Nancy discussed the reimbursement from people who receive Welfare Assistance.

Nancy noted that there would be some revenue still coming in.

The 2020 estimated revenue will be presented on January 7th.

Marylou asked if anyone had questions on the budget for Nancy.

Nancy noted that telephone costs have increased. She noted the new person and the BOS should look at obtaining better rates from another provider.

Linda asked when there might be better numbers for property insurance; Nancy noted it renews in July. Nancy discussed that Primex has changed from previous years. Gary noted that Primex treats the Water District very well.

It was discussed that the insurance company does not increase for the addition of a vehicle until it is renewed. Nancy discussed the deductibles for vehicle accidents, etc.

Nancy discussed the various conferences attended by the Finance Officer.

She noted that the audit for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector will be moved to line 01-4150.2-301. She discussed the audit that would be required if the town received additional Federal Funds.

Nancy had decreased the Assessing/Mapping Line as not as much had been used. Linda asked if it could be dropped more. Nancy did not know, but will look at as not all the bills are in yet.

Nancy noted the Health Insurance was reduced when the open enrollment was completed. She will look at this again. Nancy noted that some funds were returned from Worker's Comp as they had sufficient funds in the reserve account.

The Electricity Line covers the office, town hall and meetinghouse.

Linda asked when the lease is up for the current town office - December of 2020. Virginia noted the BOS is not prepared to present any kind of plan for office space.

Joni confirmed that only the Town Hall gets oil with the remaining buildings having propane.

Gary noted that there is only one water meter is being installed in the building at 940 Suncook Valley Highway. It was discussed that it was an unknown cost for the tenants as they did not know how the owner would be handling that cost.

Nancy noted that the insurance & maintenance for the computers has increased for 2020. She discussed issues with the system.

The Health Officer is available on call. The State does all the food inspections for the Town. Linda asked why the Health Officer might be called. Nancy discussed various issues for which he might be called. The cost is \$140.00 every two weeks.

Nancy noted Epsom Citizens receive many benefits from the Community Action Program. She has not received a request for 2020.

Patriotic Services is for Memorial Day Services.

Linda asked if the Welfare Officer is connected to Community Action Program. Nancy noted she does work with them.

Marylou questioned if a meeting would be required Thursday. Members discussed when revisions can be made. Gary asked if you have a question for a department send to Marylou.

Petition warrant articles were discussed, with it being noted that they are due January 14th. Nancy noted that the signatures have to be verified by the Supervisors of the Checklist once they come to the office. Joni asked if anyone has heard about any petition warrant articles; no one has. The Committee only has to hold a public hearing on them if it involves money.

The Warrants would have to be signed by January 23th by the Committee and posted by January 27th.

Len had two items he wanted to discuss with the Committee.

1. He still had a problem with the Library. The 3 essential departments did reduce or kept their budgets the same. The Library had an increase. Penny noted that they gave raises in 2019 and no other department did. Linda disagreed, noting that she would like to look at everyone's budget as they all had increases. Joni noted they did not increase their line for purchasing books, but if the costs increase, they will take the money from the funds they have in reserve. They want to build a shed and will use the non-lapsing fund. Mr. Paine called Joni and also indicated that when the fund is depleted it is gone as no money is being put into the fund. Virginia noted that they reduced the maintenance costs. Marylou noted they had requested \$757.00 out of earned income from the funds held by the Trustees that is being sent to them next week.
2. Len's other issue was the BCEP and its giving 10% of the non-ferrous recycling funds to employees. If you are paying someone money to pick aluminum cans for recycling you do not get the amount it costs to have someone pick the can out of the refuse. He noted there were a lot of things brought up last week. He noted we are responsible forever for the discontinued dump site that is there. He noted that site is always going to be a problem.

Virginia noted that she was surprised that Pittsfield Schools do not recycle. Len asked if it is done in Epsom, they do. Len noted that it is about the food (government surplus). Barnstead gets more than they need and they dispose of it in the dumpsters. It was discussed in the past if they do not take it, they would not get it in the future. Len noted that it has always been an issue.

Linda asked about the moving of the old dump and to where. Penny said to somewhere that has a membrane – Len noted that people have to begin thinking about this. He noted the other items the Administrator indicates they have to have to budget for will keep increasing.

Gary questioned recycling the material and giving the employees bonuses for doing their job. Len noted that they are getting paid to do their job. Virginia noted that the Town does not give bonuses for employees to do a good job. It was discussed you are stealing from the people. Linda noted it is the wrong thing to do. Meadow noted that it needs to stop and we have 4 towns and get the towns to correct the situation. Penny noted the public hearing for the budget usually lasts 10 minutes, this year it was 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Len indicated the labor costs are the most expensive costs. He noted when it began, recycling was more lucrative. He further discussed the issues with recycling today. Joni noted that when she sat on the Board, the BCEP did not spend much time on the budget. She noted the town's portion only changed due to population for many years. Len discussed when new trucks are purchased it increases the repair costs. He noted that they do not look at some of the costs that are wear and tear (tires, etc.). He noted issues are also due to the State lowering the PFOAs limits. Linda asked if there was someone in the Office who could be

spoken with regarding the issues. The issues were discussed. Len thought management needs to tighten their belt. He noted that recycling is not there. Penny noted that it would be difficult to take the bonus away from the employees, there are no raises according to Lisa. It was asked if there was a cost of living increase. Penny noted that the \$125,000.00 is one year, with it being \$132,000.00 next year. Marylou noted that in the past there was funds to do the cap. Len noted the money was used to purchase trucks. The reserve fund is general with little to no money being added.

Marylou asked if the members wanted any other departments to return at a January meeting. Gary suggested departments could be told there may be a discussion on their budget and if they want to send a representative they could.

Minutes of December 12, 2019

The minutes of December 12, 2019 were reviewed and amended.

Meadow motioned to approve the minutes of December 12, 2019 as amended, Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

**Linda motioned to adjourn; Len seconded the motion. The motion passed.
Marylou adjourned the meeting at 10:18 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary