

TOWN OF EPSOM
BUDGET COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 3, 2020

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

Not in Attendance: Brian O'Sullivan, School Board Representative

Other Attendees: Robert Paine; Pat Curley; Stuart Thompson; Rick Bilodeau

Marylou opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

Library

Mr. Paine noted that the Library Director will be retiring this year. She will remain part time and mentor the new director.

He noted that cost of books has increased. Maintained has increased as they have added cleaning at the Old Library Building.

They have increased the Library Director's salary as a new director will require a higher salary. Also, the other full-time person will be going to part time next year also.

The distribution of books is going well. The children's programs are going well with only small groups attending for reading and other activities.

Mr. Paine noted all the staff wanted to continue working during the shutdown. They have been doing different things at the Library that normally are not done often, i.e., purge the shelves of older books.

Penny questioned the wage increases. It was discussed that the current Library Director will be working 24 hours a week next year at her current rate of pay. Mr. Paine noted that they could not hire a new person until after the budget passed. Reducing the increase in the wage line was discussed.

Gary asked the capacity the current Director would be working in. Mr. Paine noted they wanted both the current director and children's librarian to stay on as they know the community and patrons.

Penny asked the number of hours they currently work. The director is cutting back by

working between 25 to 30 hours, both currently work 35 hours a week as full time.

Marylou questioned if the director goes part time will she be covered under the health insurance. Virginia noted that she would not be able to continue with the insurance as a full-time employee.

Len discussed the book line asking the cost of books – children's books cost approximately \$19.00 with adult books costing \$30.00. Len asked what happens to the old books. Mr. Paine noted they are given away. Len noted that for two years we had a budget that did not pass. He felt the budget that was a \$40,000.00 increase was difficult.

Meadow noted that other departments were asked to not have increases from last year. Linda asked how much lower than other towns the director's salary was. Mr. Paine noted they added \$5,000.00 for the position for when a new director is hired.

Pat Curley noted it made sense to reduce the salary line for the three months they would not have a new person. The salary was discussed as the Town did not hire the office staff at the rate the retired staff was paid.

Len noted that the town should not be paying the same or more in wages just because other towns pay more in wages. He does not want to see a default budget.

Joni asked if they had a minimum or maximum salary to be advertised. Mr. Paine noted the minimum would be the current salary (\$49,000.00) plus \$5,000.00 for the maximum.

Mr. Paine noted it is more a community aspect they are looking for in a director.

Marylou noted the budget should be a decrease as 2020 had an extra pay period that will not be had in 2021.

It was discussed that the sheet the Library presented was \$5,000.00 less than what was presented in the town budget. It was noted that the budget was increasing by \$47,242.00 which is a large increase.

Mr. Paine noted if they removed 3 months of salary for the new person it would remove approximately \$12,000.00. They were asked to see if the budget could be reduced further.

It was discussed there was a Library Capital Reserve Fund and in 2020 no money was requested from this account.

Marylou noted they had to have the 2020 budget match what is in the budget and the 2021 budget has to be reduced. They will return on December 17 at 7:45 PM.

Zoning Compliance Officer

It was noted that the wages decreased by \$3,319.00 for the new Zoning Compliance Officer. Mr. Thompson noted that currently he was working 20 hours a week planning to increase to 40 hours a week in the future (summer). They are in discussion for signage issues. He is working with the Zoning Board of Adjustment to clean those items up.

Virginia noted Mr. Thompson had worked with Jay for a few weeks. He is reviewing all the records, etc. to clean up items.

Len was confused as he has been to a lot of Board of Selectmen and other meetings and never heard signage discussed. He noted that if it was not a problem before how has it become a problem. Virginia noted with the change in office staff people have been filing items differently. The issues were discussed. Virginia noted that the old officer was on a salary. Mr. Thompson is an hourly employee. He is working less hours currently with an increase planned for the summer.

Mr. Thompson noted that there are funds to bring Jay back to assist with some items in the future. He reviewed the budget for the committee. Mr. Thompson is proposing to purchase a camera for road inventory, etc. Marylou noted she did feel people would want their pictures on line. Penny and Len agreed that they did feel this should be done. Mr. Thompson noted he would not purchase the camera per their comments. He discussed working with GIS people for building placement, etc. Joni hoped that the people we hired to do that would be doing it.

Joni motioned increasing the Zoning Compliance postage line to \$100 adding \$50.00 and remove \$450.00 from miscellaneous; Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The mileage reduction was discussed with the committee determining the mileage line should remain the same.

Mary noted Mr. Thompson mentioned he was attending classes for building inspector and we do not have a building inspector. Virginia noted the position is being discussed by the Selectmen, Fire Department and Planning Board. He is gaining more information for his use. Virginia noted that Mr. Thompson is paying for the training personally.

Penny asked what he did for inspections. Mr. Thompson noted if a permit is submitted then he goes out to be sure the person is meeting all requirements.

Emergency Management

Mr. Bilodeau noted the budget is mostly the same except the Selectmen increased the salary by \$.50/hour. He does not try to spend more money than necessary. He noted the equipment he has within the room. He discussed other items Emergency Management has and items purchased for the Town with grants, etc.

Penny asked what the training funds were used for. Mr. Bilodeau noted that due to COVID it was not used this year. There were items purchased using funds due to COVID. Penny asked if the training could be completed. Mr. B noted that this year the training was cancelled as it had to be in person and the State had to also participate. He noted other training he was not allowed to go to. He is certified as an Emergency Management Director. He discussed the staff that should be attending his trainings.

Mr. Bilodeau. noted the phone system at the office was purchased with COVID funds. He discussed conference calls he has participated in due to COVID.

Len asked about the table top training that never happens asking why. Mr. Bilodeau. noted that to be certified that the State has to participate to discuss what needs to occur. He noted that there should be one every 5 years. It was noted it should be a priority to hold this training. Mr. Bilodeau noted no one wants to attend due to COVID.

Minutes of November 17, 2020

The minutes of November 17, 2020 were reviewed and amended.

Meadow motioned to approve the minutes of November 17, 2020 as amended, Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed with one abstention.

Marylou noted Welfare and Conservation did not want to meet with the Board. She asked if anyone had questions for them to e-mail to her and she will forward to them. She noted that the ZBA Chair also did not want to attend, she requested questions for him also.

Len discussed BCEP. He noted the budget should not change from last year. Funds remaining from last year will go to the BCEP Capital Reserve Fund. They had not posted the Administrator's position. They are looking for someone part time and would like an engineer. They have revised the set up for the budget.

The \$50,000.00 added to the budget about three years ago as a onetime increase and how to reduce the budget by that amount. Len noted they are going to set up a subcommittee to determine what needs to be done with the old dump. He noted the towns are contributing funds for this. He discussed the charter for BCEP and having a subcommittee meet more than once a month and not have an Administrator.

Len discussed the location of the old dump and the monitoring wells. He noted it was fine until the State changed the water testing regulations. He felt it would be very costly to remedy the situation.

Penny questioned having the position part time and having a full-time salary included in the budget.

Joni noted the budget for Epsom has increased due to the population. Joni noted that Hugh Curley is overseeing the administration of BCEP asking what is happening with the salary. Len noted it is going in the Capital Reserve Fund.

Linda noted the increase of \$8.00 per resident for Epsom in the prior year. Meadow noted the budget is increasing by approximately \$13,000.00. The issues were further discussed.

Marylou will get answers for committee questions and copies of the BCEP budget for members.

Meadow motioned to adjourn; Linda seconded the motion. The motion passed. Marylou adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary