

TOWN OF EPSOM  
BUDGET COMMITTEE  
DECEMBER 29, 2020

**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:** Michael Wiggett, Cheryl Gilpatrick, Chief Preve, Scott Elliott, Gary Perry; Robert Paine; Pat Curley

Marylou opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

**Highway Department**

Mr. Elliott noted the following regarding the proposed Highway Department budget.

**Line 4313120 – (Snow Removal)** – The line remained the same as the amount of usage is unknown depending upon the weather.

**Line 4313260 (Rentals and Leases)** – The line has remained the same as they rent equipment and do much of the work with Highway Department Labor.

**Line 4314310 (Engineering Services)** – Mr. Elliott does not plan to complete any **Engineering next year** projects that will require engineering in 2021.

**Line 4314325 – (Safety Details)** – He does not foresee a use for this line in 2021.

**Line 4314435 (Pavement Striping)** – He plans to do a lot of striping.

**Line 4114450 (Highway Reconstruction)** – Mr. Elliott plans additional road reconstruction in 2021, including Carriage Hill Road and Colonial Drive. If additional funds are required, he will use Capital Reserve Funds.

**Line 4316370 (Training and Conferences)** – The line remains the same as 2020. They did not attend trainings this year due to COVID.

**Line 4316430 (Vehicle Maintenance)** – The Department has a new truck and he does not plan to use much of this line so he has decreased it.

**Loader** – Mr. Elliott hopes to lease a new loader next year due to the wear and tear of the current one the Town has.

**Line 4316635 – (Diesel Fuel)** – This line was reduced as the Highway Department only has one truck that uses diesel.

**Line 4316640 – (Gasoline)** – This line was increased due to the new truck using gasoline.

**Line 4317430 – (Repairs and Maintenance)** – Mr. Elliott would like to install siding on the Highway Department building to help protect it.

Penny asked about the wages as his proposal was different than on town budget. Mr. Elliott had determined different increases than what the Selectmen proposed.

Joy asked how he calculated the snow plowing. Mr. Elliott noted this is an item that could not be calculated. Meadow asked if he used the five-year average, Mr. Elliott used a three-year average.

Len questioned if he thought there was enough in the gasoline line as the costs had increased last week. Len suggested increasing gasoline the gasoline line.

Linda reviewed the 5-year budget for the Department noting there was \$100,000 less spent in 2020. Mr. Elliott noted the \$100,000 less spent was due to his putting two large projects on hold in 2020 due to COVID.

Gary discussed he could find \$2,000 or \$3,000 in budget if he needed additional funds on a line.

Mr. Elliott discussed the equipment to be replaced in the CIP. He discussed the need for a Loader sooner than 2022. He feels the Town will benefit in a lease situation for the loader because of repair costs of newer equipment.

Mr. Elliott noted that he may need another full-time employee in 2022. He noted there are two large residential developments with roads ready to be accepted that will require maintenance in the future.

Mr. Elliott noted the use of the prisoners is not something he can count on.

Virginia asked if two part time laborers would work – Scott did not think so as they could not always be counted on. It was discussed it would have to be a warrant article for a full-time employee.

## **Police Department**

Chief Preve reviewed the department's budget.

Chief Preve noted \$1200 could be removed from the Computer Support line as he has repaired the problem.

**Line 4211681 (Uniforms)** – Chief Preve reduced the line by \$500 as all his officers are equipped.

**Line 4211760 (Vehicles)** – The cost of a new vehicle with equipment is \$42,000. He will use Special Detail funds to supplement the equipment line. The new vehicles are wider and would require new equipment to fit it.

The Selectmen increased the Health Insurance buyback amount.

The Chief discussed he put in \$1.00/hour increase in the salary lines for the officers and secretary, but the Selectmen reduced the amount to 50 cent/hour. He noted they are at full staff. He asked the amount be returned to \$1.00/hour. He noted the Handbook is being revised. He discussed current with the accumulation of 288 hours of sick time the Town would give them 24 hours of pay. This incentive is being removed from the Handbook. He feels that incentive should remain. He thought he might have to increase his overtime line if that incentive is removed.

Linda asked if the incentive is part of the union negotiations. Chief Preve noted they do not have a union. He noted it has been around for some time. Virginia noted when they were redoing the handbook, they looked at information from various sources. She noted the Handbook is with the attorneys.

**Line 4212121 (Court & MV Hearings)** - Linda asked if that line could be reduced since they are fully staffed. Chief Preve noted that if an officer is not on duty, they receive at least 2 hours' time to attend court or a hearing. Chief Preve noted it depends on how busy the Department is. The Chief noted with four officers there are more arrests. He thought he could drop it down to \$8,000 but they do not know how many arrests would be occurring. Virginia noted it has gone up and down.

**Joni motioned to remove the \$1200 for the Police Department Internet (Line 4217411), Meadow seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

Len asked if someone is arrested and goes to court does the Town get any of the fine. Chief Preve indicated no; the money would go to the State with a small portion going to the Police Academy.

Chief Preve noted if he remains at full staff, he will be requesting another officer. They would be used partially at the school and also road time. Marylou asked if a current officer could be used at the school. It was discussed they get calls from the school. The DARE program is taught by the Sheriff's Department. Chief Preve indicated he would not be requesting the additional officer if the school is still using virtual learning

## **Minutes of December 10, 2020**

The minutes of December 10, 2020 were reviewed and amended.

**Meadow motioned to approve the minutes of December 10, 2020 as amended, Len seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

### **Parks & Recreation**

Gary Perry noted he did not change the budget for 2021. He noted there are some trees that have to be removed. He hoped to get back on track for park repairs.

Gary noted the Park was not rented as much in 2020. He hopes to replant trees in 2021. If it is as dry in 2021, he will have to irrigate newly planted trees. There is a need for repairs on some buildings.

In 2020 they did not put in a trash bin at the swimming area.

Joni asked if he would like to encumber any funds. Gary noted he would like to encumber the \$2,500 for Forest Restoration. Encumbering funds was discussed. Meadow suggested in the future the Selectmen contact Department Heads for encumbrances early. Virginia noted this had occurred in early December.

Joni asked if removal of trees would be coming from Groundskeeping. Gary noted it would. Gary asked if the mowing was done as often in 2020. It was not due to the drought.

Penny asked where the port-a-potties were under. Gary noted under Groundskeeping. Penny asked if they were checked or monitored. Gary noted he tries to monitor them.

## **Minutes of December 15, 2020**

The minutes of December 15, 2020 were reviewed and amended.

**Meadow motioned to approve the minutes of December 15, 2020 as amended, Joy seconded the motion. The motion passed.**

### **Library**

Marylou noted they had made revisions to the 2021 salaries asking if they were relayed to Deb. Mr. Paine noted they reconfigured things since the last meeting. It was discussed that the budget was only a 1.5% increase. Marylou noted the Town Office did not include the new figures in the Town budget. Marylou will e-mail Deb with the new figures.

Bob noted that Vickie Benner is going to 24 hours a week, dental, health and short-term

disability insurances were eliminated for the Library Director and Vicki. There are benefits for the new Library Director and 4 months of that salary was deducted.

The current Director will be working part time at the same salary. Mr. Paine noted that there will need to be coordination and guidance for organization of the use of the Library after hours.

Joni asked the average pay of the other employees (not Vickie and Nancy). Bob reviewed the salaries for the other employees.

Penny verified they budgeted for insurance for the new Director. It was discussed they did not know when Nancy would be fully retired.

Linda thanked them for doing what was asked of them.

Len asked the final number for the Library budget; it is \$241,431.

Virginia noted the Town Moderator met with the Selectmen regarding moving the date of the deliberative session. The Selectmen voted to keep the deliberative session and voting at the current dates. The School Board did not want to see it moved either. The deliberative session will be held at the school on February 6. The School Deliberative session will be held first with the Town session immediately following.

There will be an area for members who do not wear masks. They are looking into having a virtual session where the public can observe but not participate. The Selectmen will be trying to set up a virtual meeting to review the warrant articles prior to the deliberative session.

The snow date for the deliberative sessions will be the afternoon of February 7.

Penny asked how people will be notified of the Zoom meeting. Virginia noted the sites where Town notices are sent out. She discussed the Website for the Town that people can subscribe to for notices.

Joni asked if the School could put out the one call for the notification.

Marylou discussed future meetings. The Town budget and warrant articles will be discussed on January 5.

It was determined to meet January 7 to review the school warrant articles.

There will be a meeting on January 12 with the Public Hearing on January 14.

Meadow discussed the public hearing for BCEP. She noted it was posted on the Pittsfield Home Page and the Concord Monitor two days prior to the date.

**Meadow motioned to adjourn; Penny seconded the motion. The motion passed.  
Marylou adjourned the meeting at 8:28 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Bosiak  
Recording Secretary