

TOWN OF EPSOM
BUDGET COMMITTEE
JANUARY 12, 2023

Attendees: Marylou Keane, Chairman; Joni Kitson, Vice Chairman; Gary Kitson, Water District Representative; Meadow Wysocki, Selectmen’s Representative; Mary Frambach; Joyce Heck; Floyd Graham; Linda Hodgdon; Penny Graham; Michael Muise, School Board Representative

Not in Attendance: Len Gilman

Other Attendees: Deborah Sargent; Carol Zink Mailloux; Patrick Connors; Rob Topik; Mike Wiggett; Cheryl Gilpatrick; Karen Guercia; Norm Royce; Virginia Drew

Marylou opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

Marylou noted the deliberative session is February 4, 2023 at 9:00 AM. She reviewed the rules for the public hearings.

EPSOM SCHOOL DISTRICT

Marylou opened the public hearing for the Epsom School District Warrant Articles. She noted that Article 1 would be discussed last.

ARTICLE 2. Shall the Epsom School District vote to approve the cost items set forth in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Epsom School Board and the Epsom Education Association for the 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 fiscal years, which calls for the following estimated increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

2023/24	\$ 69,527
2024/25	\$ 191,423
2025/26	\$ 138,439

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of \$69,527 for the 2023/24 fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels?

*School Board Recommends
Budget Committee **Recommends/Does Not Recommend Approval***

If passed, the new estimated tax rate will be (\$19.26) [per thousand], which will result in a (\$0.13) increase over the previous year tax rate.

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there were any questions or concerns from the public.

Virginia Drew asked if there were additional amounts within the proposed contract. Mr. Connors noted the insurance changes.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 2.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 2 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 2 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 9 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 3. Shall the Epsom School District, if article #2 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article # 2 cost items only? (Majority vote)

This Article does not require a vote of the Budget Committee as it does not involve any monetary spending.

ARTICLE 4. Shall the Epsom School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) to be added to the Special Education Trust Fund previously established, with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2023 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2023? NO AMOUNT TO BE RAISED FROM TAXATION.

School Board Recommends

*Budget Committee **Recommends/Does Not Recommend Approval***

[Estimated tax impact per thousand \$.00]

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there were any questions or concerns from the public.

Virginia Drew asked the balance in the fund. Mr. Connors indicated as of December 31, 2022 there is \$305,267.00 in the fund.

Mrs. Drew asked if the funds are invested in the market. Ms. Guercia noted they are in an interest-bearing account.

Mr. Topik asked if this Article is on the ballot every year. Mr. Connors noted it is. Mr. Topik verified that it is from the current year's taxation.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 4.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 4 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 4 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 9 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 5. Shall the District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of up to Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) to be added to the Building Maintenance and Repair Trust Fund previously established, with such amount to be funded from the June 30, 2023 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2023? NO AMOUNT TO BE RAISED FROM TAXATION.

School Board Recommends

*Budget Committee **Recommends/Does Not Recommend Approval***

[Estimated tax impact per thousand \$.00]

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there were any questions or concerns from the public.

Mr. Topik asked about the wording of "up to" in the Article. Mr. Connors noted the School Board has to determine if there are surplus funds to put into the fund. He verified this Article is on the ballot every year.

Mrs. Drew asked how the funds are invested. Marylou noted they are invested through the Trustee of Trust Funds with the information sent to the Attorney General's office for oversight.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 5.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 5 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 5 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 9 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 6. Shall the voters of the Epsom school district within school administrative unit number 53 adopt the provisions of RSA 194-C:9-b to allow for insertion of the school administrative unit budget as a separate warrant article at annual school district meetings? [This article is submitted by petition]

(In accord with RSA 40:14-b, II(a) and RSA 40:14, III, this article shall be voted on by official ballot on March 14, 2023, 3/5 majority vote required for passage).

This Article does not require a vote of the Budget Committee as it does not involve any monetary spending.

Joni noted that the Budget Committee had a lot of discussion on this article.

Joyce arrived to the meeting.

ARTICLE 1. Shall the Epsom School District vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling Thirteen Million, Four Hundred Three Thousand, One Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$13,403,160)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be, Thirteen Million, Three Hundred Fifty-Six Thousand, Five Hundred Fifty-One Dollars (\$13,356,551) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Epsom School District, or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

*School Board Recommends
Budget Committee **Recommends/Does Not Recommend Approval***

If passed, the new estimated tax rate will be \$19.13 [per thousand], which will result in a \$1.48 increase over the previous year tax rate.

If proposed budget fails and default budget is passed, the new estimated tax rate will be \$19.04 [per thousand], which will result in a \$1.39 increase over the previous year tax rate.

[Note: Warrant Article #1 (operating budget article) does not include separate Warrant Article #2.]

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there were any questions or concerns from the public.

Mr. Topik asked the approximate percentage increase over last year. Mr. Connors noted in the brochure on page 13 it shows the increases. Rob commented it was a 2.84% increase.

Virginia asked if they are in a contract with the bus company. Mr. Connors noted this year was an extended year with the previous contract. Virginia noted the issues with gas costs, obtaining drivers, etc. Mr. Connors noted the information is on page 11 of the brochure.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 1.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 1 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 1 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

Marylou closed the public hearing for the Epsom School District.

EPSOM VILLAGE DISTRICT

Marylou opened the public hearing for the Epsom Village District.

Article 7: To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate \$223,750 for the 2023 operating budget.

Commissioners Recommend/Budget Committee Recommends

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 7; there were no public comments.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 7.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 7 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 7 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

Article 8: To raise and appropriate five thousand dollars (\$5,000) to be added to the Water System Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund with said funds to come from

user fees. Commissioners Recommend / Budget Committee Recommends

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 8.

Mrs. Drew asked if the Commissioners met to vote. Gary indicated they did meet and voted on the articles.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 8.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 8 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 8 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

Marylou closed the public hearing for the Epsom Village District.

TOWN WARRANT ARTICLES

Marylou opened the public hearing for the Town Warrant Articles. She noted Article 1 would be discussed last.

ARTICLE 2: Shall the Town vote to establish a contingency fund for the 2023 year for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) from the Unassigned Fund Balance to go into the fund? Any appropriation left in the fund at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund. Majority vote required. This Article and its appropriation are in addition to the operating budget.

No tax impact.
Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *Recommended by the Budget Committee*

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 2; there were no public comments.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 2.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

Gary verified that last year's Article also requested \$20,000.00.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 2 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 2 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to be added to the previously established Expendable Trust Fund for the Maintenance of Historic Town-Owned Buildings with said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *No tax impact*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 3.

Mrs. Drew commented that the Town has supported this Article in the past and it allows the Selectmen to have funds for repairs if required.

Mr. Topik asked if this fund was used for the renovations to the historic Town Hall. Meadow noted the Selectmen had depleted the fund with this project and are trying to build it up again.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 3.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

Gary asked the buildings this fund could be used for. Meadow noted the Town Hall, Old Library and Meetinghouse.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 3 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 3 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be added to the previously established Government Buildings Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund with said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *No tax impact*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 4.

Mr. Topik asked which buildings this would apply to. Meadow noted the Police and Fire Department buildings and the Library.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 4.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 4 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 4 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one thousand eight hundred dollars (\$1,800) to be added to the previously established Cemetery Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund, with said funds to come from the Unassigned Fund Balance, which is equivalent to the total amount of cemetery plot sales for 2022? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

No tax impact.
Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *Recommended by the Budget Committee*

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 5; there were no public comments.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 5.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 5 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 5 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-nine thousand dollars (\$49,000) to pay for six (6) months' salary, benefits and

equipment for one (1) additional full-time police officer? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and is in addition to the operating budget.

Estimated tax impact is \$.09 per thousand
Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *Recommended by the Budget Committee*

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 6.

Mrs. Drew spoke in favor of the Article even with the existing openings in the department. She noted the Town is put at risk with officers working overtime to cover the shifts 24/7. She noted the recent school incidents. Mrs. Drew applauded the department for doing a great job.

Mrs. Sargent asked why the request was for only 6 months of expenses. Meadow noted by the time the Article passed and they hired someone for the position it would be 6 months into the year.

Fire Chief Yeaton noted that when the cities close the homeless shelters those people often come to Epsom. He noted that the Fire Department likes to have a Police Officer available on certain calls. He spoke in favor of this Article.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 6.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 6 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 6 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate a sum of four hundred and twenty thousand dollars (\$420,000) for the purpose of purchasing a new ambulance with major equipment for the Fire Department, and further authorize the withdrawal of the same amount of four hundred and twenty thousand dollars (\$420,000) from the Fire and Rescue Apparatus Fund for that purpose? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and is in addition to the operating budget.

No tax impact
Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *Recommended by the Budget Committee*

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 7.

Chief Yeaton noted he had met with a representative for the potential purchase of a new ambulance on Monday and even if the Town votes for the equipment it would be two years out before the Town would receive the ambulance. He noted the money would not be paid until the new vehicle was delivered.

Mrs. Sargent asked where the money would be coming from. Meadow noted the Fire Apparatus Fund. Chief Yeaton noted the Town voted for this fund several years ago.

Mr. Topik asked if it would appear on the ballot as it indicates no funds would be raised from taxes. Meadow noted it would be on the ballot and the wording is from DRA.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 7.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

Joni asked if it was a guaranteed price even if the ambulance is not received for two years. Chief Yeaton noted currently the cost is at \$414,000.00 and if it would cost more than the \$420,000.00, he is requesting they would have to return to request more funds.

The Budget Committee members had no further questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 7 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 7 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand six hundred dollars (\$15,600) for the purpose of purchasing five sets of firefighter turn out gear for the Fire Department, and further authorize the withdrawal of the same amount of fifteen thousand six hundred dollars (\$15,600) from the Fire and Rescue Apparatus Fund for that purpose? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and is in addition to the operating budget.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *No tax impact*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 8; there were no public comments.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 8.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 8 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 8 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of forty-nine thousand dollars (\$49,000) to pay for six (6) months' salary and benefits for one (1) additional full-time firefighter/ paramedic? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and is in addition to the operating budget.

Estimated tax impact is \$.09 per thousand
Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 9.

Mrs. Drew noted the Town is fortunate to have the dedicated people and noted the work they complete. She noted Epsom is a hub town with the intersection of Routes 4 and 28.

Mrs. Sargent clarified the reason for six months of expenses.

Chief Yeaton noted currently the department is on two calls and has requested an ambulance from another town.

Police Chief Michael noted there are calls the Police Officers do not attend and he does not feel it is overkill to have an additional firefighter.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 9.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

Gary asked if the position is for a firefighter or a paramedic. Chief Yeaton noted he would like to have a firefighter/paramedic, but he needs the paramedic person. He noted that often they do not unload the patient at Concord Hospital immediately. They are doing more treatment in the field.

Floyd verified currently the department has one paramedic without firefighter training. He asked if this person could be trained as a firefighter. Chief Yeaton noted it depends upon what the person wants to do. Floyd asked if there are any current firefighters who might become a paramedic. Chief Yeaton noted there is the possibility.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 9 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 9 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town vote to discontinue the Fire Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund created in 1997. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal to be placed in the general fund. Majority vote required.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *No tax impact*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 10; there were no public comments.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 10.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns.

The Budget Committee members had no questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 10 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 10 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 11: Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate three hundred fifty-six dollars and forty -two cents (\$356.42) to be placed in the Fire and Rescue Apparatus Capital Reserve Fund, with said funds to come from unassigned fund balance. (This represents the funds from the discontinuation of the Fire Apparatus CRF). This Article is contingent on the passage of Article 10.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *No tax impact*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 11; there were no public comments.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 11.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns; there were no Budget Committee questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 11 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 11 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the purpose of reconstruction and improvements to town roads? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *Estimated tax impact is \$.29 per thousand*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 12.

Ms. Gilpatrick noted the Road Agent is doing a great job on the roads and the money would assist in keeping up the roads.

Mrs. Sargent asked what the funds purchase. Ms. Gilpatrick noted the fund is used for major projects, i.e., road reconstruction. When there are not enough funds in a budget line the Road Agent uses some of these funds.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 12.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns; there were no Budget Committee questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 12 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 12 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the purpose of purchasing motorized vehicles and equipment for the Highway Department? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *Estimated tax impact is \$.02 per thousand*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 13; there were no public comments.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 13.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns; there were no Budget Committee questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 13 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 13 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) to be added to the Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the purpose of bridge replacement and repair? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *Estimated tax impact is \$.05 per thousand*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 14.

Ms. Gilpatrick spoke in favor of the Article. She noted the fund is also used for matching grants and the more money in the fund the more grants can be matched.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 14.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns; there were no Budget Committee questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 14 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 14 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) to be deposited into the Capital Reserve Fund previously established for the potential future expansion of the public water system? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *Estimated tax impact is \$.04 per thousand*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 15.

Ms. Gilpatrick noted the Town is applying for a grant that these funds could be used as a match for.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 15.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns; there were no Budget Committee questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 15 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 15 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000) to be used by the Northwood Lake Watershed Association to control Milfoil in Northwood Lake? Majority vote required. This appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

Recommended by the Selectmen 3 - 0 *Estimated tax impact is \$.01 per thousand*
Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 16.

Mr. Royce, President of the Northwood Lake Watershed Association, thanked the Town for the funds received in the past. He noted that Northwood, Deerfield and Epsom all have Warrant Articles to grant funds for the removal of the milfoil. They spend \$24,000.00 a year. The money is used only for milfoil control. He discussed the costs depending upon the products used. He noted there is progress and they also reach out to local businesses, the State and residents around the lake.

Mrs. Drew noted the Selectmen had received information on what the Association is completing. She noted she had issues in the past. She noted that local realtors indicated that if the issue was not taken care of then property values would decrease.

Marylou thanked Mr. Royce for coming and speaking.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 16.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns; there were no Budget Committee questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 16 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 16 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

ARTICLE 1: Shall the Town of Epsom raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$ 3,843,547. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$ 3,744,148 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town of Epsom or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

The operating budget is estimated to have a tax rate of \$3.90, which is 19 cents more than the 2022 Tax rate. The default budget is estimated to have a tax rate of \$3.71, which is the same as the 2022 Tax rate.

Recommended by the Selectmen Recommended by the Budget Committee

Marylou read the Warrant Article.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on Article 1.

Mrs. Sargent asked about the \$420,000.00 additional revenue received from the State. Mrs. Drew noted it goes into the Undesignated Fund. She noted the amount the Selectmen used from the fund to offset taxes. She noted the funds were accepted by the Town.

Mrs. Drew would like the Budget Committee to consider the electric bills and the increases for the various buildings. She noted they are looking at ways to reduce the bills. She noted the Police Department and Fire Department had significant increases in their bills.

Mr. Topik asked if besides the increases in electricity are there other areas in the budget that have significant increases. Meadow noted that departments tried to compensate for the increases, but there were also increases in fuel, utilities and salaries.

Marylou closed public comment for Article 1.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns; there were no Budget Committee questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment for Article 1 requesting a motion.

Mary motioned to recommend Article 1 as written; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

TOWN REVENUE

Marylou noted the Committee had to approve the projected Town revenue.

Marylou asked if there was any public comment on the revenue; there were no public comments.

Marylou closed public comment for the proposed revenue.

Marylou asked if the Budget Committee members had questions or concerns; there were no Budget Committee questions or concerns.

Marylou closed the Budget Committee comment on the proposed revenue.

Mary motioned to recommend the Town Revenue as proposed; Linda seconded the motion.

The motion passed with a vote of 10 yes, 0 no.

Marylou closed the public hearing on the Town Articles.

Minutes

The minutes of January 10, 2023 were reviewed and amended.

Meadow motioned to approve the minutes of January 10, 2023, as amended; Joni seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Meadow discussed that she attended the SAU Executive Board meeting last night. She noted Mr. Wiggett asked for an explanation of why there were two superintendents. She noted they were told that when the superintendent was out ill, neither of the assistants wanted to take on the superintendent position. The districts were divided and the use of two superintendents was continued as it worked well.

Meadow noted there was a discussion during the meeting for the hiring of a new superintendent. If they could not find a new superintendent then they would hire an outside firm to assist in finding a new superintendent. She indicated they determined in November to continue with two superintendents. The position was posted in December. She noted that Mr. Wiggett did not answer the question when it was asked at the Budget Committee meeting. Gary noted that when this occurred there were less employees at the SAU. The issues were discussed with it being noted that the local School Board was not informed of these decisions. It was noted it should have been brought back to the town school boards.

Floyd noted that Mike Muise has gone out on a limb as Floyd has asked him questions on the side. Floyd discussed that the Budget Committee vote might have been different without the information that had been presented.

Meadow motioned to adjourn; Joni seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Marylou adjourned the meeting at 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully,

Betsy Bosiak
Recording Secretary