

EPSOM DELIBERATIVE SESSION  
OFFICIAL MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 3, 2018

The annual deliberative session was called to order at 9:02 AM on Saturday, February 3, 2018, by Moderator, Jeffrey Keeler.

The Moderator read Article 1.

**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 \$3,353,682? Should this article be defeated, the operating budget shall be \$3,363,467, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town 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 \$4.11, 46 cents less than the 2017 tax rate.  
The default budget is estimated to have a tax rate of \$4.13, 44 cents less than the 2017 tax rate.*

*Recommended by the Selectmen 3-0    Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0*

Selectman Hugh Curley stated that because of the prudent budgeting that was done this year we actually came in two cents under the default budget. He reported that the total increase of the year is about \$27,000., which is .46 under the budget from last year. The major increases are a 2% raise generally across the board and an increase in economic development. Also a study was done by the Municipal Resources Group which suggested some increased training for the Police Department. Hugh also stated that there is a decrease in health insurance costs. There were not many other changes.

There being no further discussion, Article 1 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 2.

**ARTICLE 2:** Shall the Town vote to establish a contingency fund for the 2018 year for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) from the Unassigned Fund Balance to go into the fund? No amount to be raised from taxation. 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 10-0*

There being no discussion, Article 2 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 3.

**ARTICLE 3:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) from the Unassigned Fund Balance as of December 31, 2017, which is equivalent to the total amount of cemetery plot sales for 2017, to be added to the previously established Cemetery Maintenance Expendable Trust

Fund? No amount to be raised from taxation. 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 10-0*

There being no discussion, Article 3 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 4.

**ARTICLE 4:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of two hundred ninety-three thousand eight hundred forty-two dollars (\$293,842.00) to purchase a new ambulance with major equipment, to include but not be limited to a power cot, stair chair, power load, to replace Ambulance 1, and further authorize the withdrawal of up to the same amount of two hundred ninety-three thousand eight hundred forty-two dollars (\$293,842.00) from the Fire and Rescue Apparatus Fund for that purpose? No amount to be raised by taxation. Any trade-in value received for Ambulance 1 will reduce the amount withdrawn from the fund. 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 10-0*

Fire Chief Stewart Yeaton spoke on the article. He stated that \$697,960 is in the Fire and Rescue Apparatus Fund. The ambulance that he wants to replace has 112,000 plus miles on it. Last year the ambulance transported just under 500 patients which are 100 more calls than the previous year. The revenue coming in was just short of \$180,000. There have been six calls in just the past 24 hours. One of the bigger expense items is the power load system which has a lift on the cot itself to raise it into the ambulance. This will help load bigger patients safely into the ambulance. The cot itself costs \$20,000 and the hoist system is another \$40,000. Stewart stated that the trade in value of the old ambulance is only \$4,000. He does not feel there is any sense in keeping three ambulances as we can share equipment with other towns if necessary.

There being no further discussion, Article 4 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 5.

**ARTICLE 5:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000.00) to purchase a used heavy duty truck with equipment for the Highway Department to be used for summer and winter maintenance? Majority vote required. This appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

*Estimated tax impact is \$ .18 per thousand*

*Recommended by the Selectmen 3-0    Recommended by the Budget Committee 8-2*

Road Agent, Gordon Ellis stated the reason he is looking for this truck is for efficiency both in winter and summer. He feels it will save us money in both the winter and summer rather than hiring a truck from someone else that is never on our schedule. He hopes the cost will be less than \$75,000. Gordon stated that the truck will have a plow in the front, wing on the side and a sander in the back. Right now we have a heavy duty pickup that we can't put a wing on. We are currently using our grader is to push back the snow. The new truck would allow the Highway Department to make one trip instead of three to four to haul gravel. Gordon stated that we now have a nice highway facility that will allow us to bring the truck inside to do wash and do maintenance. In the past the Town did not have a building, or water and everything had to be stored and fixed outside or be fixed elsewhere.

Rick Belanger stated that he feels with proper planning that we can hire someone with a truck that also comes with a driver. He feels it would be more cost effective based on the number of hours that the truck would be used.

There being no further discussion, Article 5 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 6.

**ARTICLE 6:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000.00) 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.

*Estimated tax impact is \$ .35 per thousand*

*Recommended by the Selectmen 3-0    Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0*

Road Agent, Gordon Ellis stated this fund allows projects like Goboro Road, North Road, Jug City, and Mt Delight to be completed. Without this fund the money for big projects would need to be raised in one year.

There being no further discussion, Article 6 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 7.

**ARTICLE 7:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) 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.

*Estimated tax impact is \$ .02 per thousand*

*Recommended by the Selectmen 3-0    Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0*

Road Agent Gordon Ellis stated he is saving to buy a new backhoe in the future. Without the fund approximately \$100,000 would need to be raised in one year.

There being no further discussion, Article 7 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 8.

**ARTICLE 8:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) 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.

*Estimated tax impact is \$ .06 per thousand*

*Recommended by the Selectmen 3-0    Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0*

Road Agent, Gordon Ellis reported that all of the Town bridges except for the ones on Cass Road and Old Turnpike Road have been replaced. He would like to get the Cass Road Bridge done in the next couple of years without State funds. He feels that it will cost twice as much with State funds. Gordon stated that we need to have a percentage of money saved before we can even get on the State list. The cost to replace the Cass Road Bridge if done by the Town would less than \$200,000 with our share being \$100,000.

There being no further discussion, Article 8 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 9.

**ARTICLE 9:** Shall the Town raise and appropriate the sum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00), 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.

*Estimated tax impact is \$ .01 per thousand*

*Recommended by the Selectmen 3-0 Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0*

There being no discussion, Article 9 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 10.

**ARTICLE 10:** Shall the Town vote to establish a Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of potential future expansion of the public water system, and raise and appropriate the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) to be deposited into this fund, and further to appoint the Board of Selectmen as the agents to expend? Majority vote required. This is a Special Warrant Article and its appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

*Estimated tax impact is \$ .02 per thousand*

*Recommended by the Selectmen 3-0 Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0*

Selectmen, Donald Harty stated hopefully this year town water will be put in on the west side of the Suncook River. Under a fund established by the State, oil companies are required to put money into the fund relating to oil spills. The State will be using some of that fund to rectify some of the problems that have occurred at gas stations around the state from chemicals leaching into the ground. A study was done around the circle and it was found that 4 or 5 places have that chemical in their water. Because of that the State will pay 100% to put pipes, hydrants and water system around the circle. There is another fund that is set up with the State from Mobil Exxon Company for contaminants and spills. It is hopeful that some of that money can be used to extend the water up Route 28 and maybe up Route 4. This article would give us some seed money for a study to be done in two to three years to see if a third well is needed. The Selectmen feel the water expansion is vital to help develop the town for commercial as well as residential use and to help out with property taxes.

Gary Kitson from the Water District answered a question that the \$6,000 in the current budget is for hydrant rental and not relative to this article. He also stated that this article does not affect the water district. This money is for a future study for another well on the west side of the Suncook River. That would extend the water system, not the Water District itself.

There being no further discussion, Article 10 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 11.

**ARTICLE 11:** Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) for the structural repair of the Old Town Hall building, and authorize the use of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000.00) from the Unassigned Fund Balance for this purpose? Majority vote required. This is a Non-Lapsing Warrant Article and will not lapse until the project is completed or December 31, 2023, whichever comes first. This appropriation is in addition to the operating budget.

*No tax impact*

*Recommended by the Selectmen 3-0 Recommended by the Budget Committee 10-0*

Don Harty stated that five or six years ago it was discovered that the old town hall roof was starting to spread which could have resulted in catastrophic failure to the roof. The Board of Selectmen had a local contractor, Neil English, who works on old historical buildings look at it. A temporary fix was put in with cables and turnbuckles that stopped the roof from spreading more and held it back a bit. Money was appropriated four or five years ago for a permanent fix. Unfortunately, Neil works all around the state and was unable to do the permanent fix. This money has now lapsed. This article is to put the money back in and have a permanent fix done on the roof.

There being no further discussion, Article 11 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator read Article 12.

**ARTICLE 12:** Shall the Town of Epsom vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 79-E relative to the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive program? Adoption of this tax relief program will allow owners of qualifying structures to apply to the Board of Selectmen for short term property tax relief from assessment increase resulting from substantial rehabilitation of the structures, provided one of the public benefits is achieved as defined by RSA 79-E:7. Majority vote required.

Selectmen, Chris Bowes explained RSA 79E:7. He stated that the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive is a temporary tax incentive that is geared towards assisting future development and positive sense of community. The Economic Development Committee has reviewed and researched this article. They feel it would help with rehabilitation of qualified structures within the Goboro Road area but not limited to that area. It will also assist with rehab of historic structures throughout the town. Chris stated that basically it allows us as a town to promote economic development through tax incentives on certain properties. If adopted, an individual who has a historic property could come to the Board of Selectmen and apply through RSA 79: E for a tax break for up to a five year period. Under the RSA the Town would take the assessed value of the property before the rehab and the assessed value of the property after the rehab. The assessed value would then be frozen for a period of time. The Economic Development Committee is looking at certain areas within Epsom that need rehabilitation to increase the appearance. One example is the old hotel at the end of Goboro Road.

There being no further discussion, Article 12 shall appear on the ballot as written.

The Moderator asked if there was any other business to come before the Town.

Steve Warner asked to reopen discussion on Article 1. A motion was made by made by Steve Warner, seconded by Nancy Wheeler, to reconsider the vote on Article 1.

The Moderator called for a voice vote. He did not hear a definitive response and called for everyone in favor to raise their card. He then asked for everyone opposed to hold up their card. The results were 17 in favor and 22 opposed. The motion failed.

Steve Warner protested and strongly stated he felt it was unfair.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Blackwell