

**Town of Epsom
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Old Meetinghouse Lower Level
January 30, 2024 5:00 PM**

Present

Linda Hodgdon, Vice Chair
Joe Wysocki
Meadow Wysocki, Select Board
Kathy DesRoches, Planning Board

Jason Johnson
Susan Lombard
Sinehan Kerman, Secretary
Mike Tardiff, CNHRPC

Absent

Vincent Pagano, Chair

Call to Order

Ms. Hodgdon called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Ms. Lombard motioned to approve November 21st Meeting Minutes as amended. Mr. Wysocki seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Agenda Review

No changes to proposed agenda.

Discussion

Groundwater Investigation Grant Review

Mr. Tardiff shared excitement that the grant for continuing groundwater investigation as a part of the Water Expansion Project was approved. There is a long process ahead to determine where the additional well would be located, likely with five or six additional steps. After determining the ideal well location, the next steps would be to protect or acquire the land, and set up test wells. The Economic Development Committee (EDC) discussed why the third well is needed, both for redundancy and potential growth.

Ms. Wysocki inquired about selling services outside of the current district. Mr. Tardiff shared that the Water District could sell water to an expanded area. There is potential to collect impact fees for new businesses established within the serviceable Water District.

Mr. Johnson asked about potential opportunities to partner on a smaller scale to get a well sooner with a private business, such as a grocery store. Mr. Tardiff shared that this is not typically done. The group discussed the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in Boscawen and the recent growth as an example. There is an opportunity if there is projected growth in an area, to pay off the difference needed for financing on a note. It would be important to find the right third well location first, and then determine possible development opportunities to see if TIF or impact fees can support the cost. Ms. Wysocki discussed the current district expansion, and

how it would have a tax impact on all residents although water is not available to all residents. The EDC discussed the need to show the opportunity to bring businesses to town which would in turn lower the tax base for residents. Mr. Tardiff shared that this is a long-term, multi-step process.

Ms. Lombard asked about the next steps if there are multiple options for well locations. Mr. Tardiff shared that in the research exercise, multiple locations may be identified, but testing would be done in two or three locations to determine the best option. Capacity and quality would be tested. Wells can be located close together, if the aquifer is strong, and the current understanding is that it is.

Ms. Wysocki asked what the next steps are, given the approval of the grant application. Mr. Tardiff answered that there is some additional detail needed, and then a statement of work will go to the governor and council, then the town can review and accept the funding and contract. Mr. Tardiff shared that the EDC may need to find out if there are any other requirements in the procurement process.

Ms. Hodgdon discussed the value of grant. The total is approximately \$55,000, with \$30,000 of that coming from matching by the town fund. An upcoming warrant article will be proposing \$20,000 to replenish that fund.

Mr. Johnson inquired about the Northern Border Regional Commission and if there would be any funding available via the Farm Bill. Mr. Tardiff shared that the Bill is still pending approval and the additional steps that would be needed to be ready if the Bill were to pass. The group then discussed the possibility of requesting matching funds from the Department of Environmental Services and the need to identify the well location beforehand.

Deliberative Session February 3

Ms. Hodgdon asked that if Mr. Pagano is unable to attend the upcoming deliberative session, who will speak on behalf of the EDC? Mr. Wysocki offered to speak through the key points of the proposed warrant article. The deliberative session will include 15 warrant articles, and the water expansion is item 13.

Other Business

Ms. Hodgdon reminded the EDC of the importance of time tracking as a part of the committee's regular activities, to track soft dollars for future grant applications. The group agreed to log hours as a part of regular meetings going forward.

Ms. Kerman inquired about the status of the Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) signs. Ms. Wysocki shared that letters were sent to property owners in December. The state applications for sign locations are complete but awaiting signatures.

Public Input

None

Mr. Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Lombard seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully submitted, Sinehan Kerman.