

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES  
TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
September 30, 2019**



**ATTENDANCE:**

Chairman Adam Munguia; Selectmen Bob Jordan, Mike Yergeau, Cody Belanger, Joe Trombley; Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge. Executive Secretary Joyce Blanchard was excused.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Munguia call the public meeting to order at 7:00 PM at the Epping Town Hall.

**PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

**LIBRARY ADDITION**

Chairman Adam Munguia asked Selectman Joe Trombley about a change order received in regards to the library addition. The change order received from Charlie Goodspeed referenced the need to install doors, trim, etc. and other items within the addition. Selectman Trombley explained that some of the items in the change order have already been contracted in the AIA contract. Chairman Munguia stated that there was a monetary component to this and thus a non-public meeting was in order to review the AIA contract against the change order. Mr. Goodspeed spoke and attempted to defend the changes and that any delay was critical to making his completion date. Discussion continued with the Selectmen stating that they needed to make sure the Town wasn't agreeing to items already approved and contracted. Chairman Munguia stated that due to apparent discrepancies between a duly executed signed contact and the changes proposed there was a need for "legal review" and that it would be further addressed next Monday night in non-public session at 6:30 PM. Mr. Goodspeed was agitated with the discussion and walked out of the meeting.

**BUDGET REVIEW**

Chairman Adam Munguia gave a brief overview of the 2020 budget. Estimated increases for health and dental were at a 10% increase as is short-term disability, unemployment insurance and worker's compensation. The rates are expected sometime in October. Town Administrator Gregory Dodge also gave a brief overview of the individual budgets. Approved salary increases from last year are now included for a full year and there is assumed COLA increase of 3%. Police and Highway have budgeted for an additional full-time employee and the Fire department has included money to bring the wages closer to that of the Town's matrix. There are also increases for software upgrades and the Town Clerk is beginning a records preservation program that would be costly to achieve in one year so it will be done incrementally.

## **FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Chief Don DeAngelis addressed the Board of Selectmen and walked through his budget with him. Chief DeAngelis proposed a budget of \$1,160,920.00 which represents an increase of 4.62%. Prompted by a question from Selectman Belanger the Chief explained that the full-time salary line included a new hire from last year at a full year's salary and that the part-time line included money to hire two part-time employees in lieu of hiring a full-time employee. The Chief walked the Board through the significant changes to his budget.

There was considerable discussion about the Safety Complex roof and then to repair it. This has come up in previous years and needs to be addressed.

Selectman Jordan stated that he doesn't like to rely on the revolving fund but that he believed salaries could be paid out of that. Town Administrator Dodge wasn't sure that was an approved use but apparently other towns do that. Selectman Jordan suggested moving some of the salary line to the revolving fund. Selectman Belanger also suggested moving some of the equipment items to the revolving fund as well and gave specifics. Chairman Munguia suggested that it was easier to defend a 3% increase versus a 5-6% increase and though he sees nothing in the Fire Department budget that is extraordinary he would appreciate the Chief taking a second look at the budget to see if he could trim the number down some.

There was considerable discussion by the Board regarding leaving the Safety Complex roof repair in the budget versus a warrant article.

**Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to have the Chief move forward with the Fire Department budget and to include the roof repairs in the form of a warrant article. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **SAFETY FACILITY**

Chief Mike Wallace joined Chief DeAngelis in presenting the Safety Facility budget. The proposed budget is \$103,050.00 which is only an increase of \$250.00. The Safety Facility budget includes money to maintain the police side of the building and the joint training room. There was limited discussion on the "Fire/Brick Museum" and under which budget it would fall under. Chief DeAngelis was overseeing progress on the museum. Administrator Dodge said that there is no money currently in any budget to support the museum. He went on to say that there are some things the Board may want to discuss in non-public as it effects reputation. The Board then moved the discussion forward.

Chief Wallace did say that the building was beginning to see some wear and tear as the building is nearly twenty years old that are not addressed in the budget.

**Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to bring the increase on this budget to zero keeping it flat. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan.** Discussion: Selectman Yergeau said that since the Board wasn't approving any budgets this evening he would hope all departments would take a second look at their budgets. Selectman Trombley echoed those thoughts and wants to insure the department heads take a second look at their budgets and make sure the numbers work.

Based on the discussion Selectman Belanger rescinded the motion and Selectman Jordan rescinded his second. Selectman Belanger asked that the Chiefs be frugal about the Safety Complex budget.

## **ACO BUDGET**

The Animal Control budget was brought forward by Chief Wallace. This budget is \$7,190.00 and is flat for 2020.

**Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to approve the Animal Control budget for 2020 at \$7,190.00. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Chief Wallace presented a budget for 2020 at \$2,482,135.00 which represents an increase of 7.35% or \$169,935.00. The Chief explained that his budget includes a 3% COLA for all non-Union employees, contractual increases for the Union officers and money for promotions next year and a new full-time officer for half of the year. Chief Wallace highlighted the major changes to the budget. Chairman Munguia then solicited questions from the Board. He further stated that he would like the Chief to remove the additional officer or remove one cruiser from the budget but it was the Selectmen who asked him to keep those costs in last year. Chairman Munguia expects a tough time with the Budget Committee and the taxpayers, though taxes have been flat the last five years that is probably going to change. There was considerable discussion regarding the additional officer and two cruisers that are in the proposed budget. The Board tried to settle if it was prudent to remove the officer and a cruiser, put a cruiser as a warrant article, etc.

**Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to present the budget with removing the additional full-time officer from the 2020 proposed budget. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to remove one police cruiser from the 2020 proposed budget. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger.** Discussion: Chairman Munguia did not think it was a good idea to do so. Chief Wallace stated that if the Board voted to do so that is fine however he warned that taking vital equipment away from his department who responds to emergency calls doesn't make sense. Further, they are responding now in unsafe vehicles and lastly the Selectmen and Budget Committee insisted that two vehicles be in the budget and now you want to remove them. He said the cruisers were a "need" not a luxury. **Vote called, Motion FAILED 1-4.**

The Chief was asked to take another look at his budget and return next week for his proposal.

Selectman Belanger brought up the already approved ACO budget stating that with a few reductions in costs the overall budget increase would change from 7.99% to a 7.21% increase. Though it isn't a significant change the "optics" of the budget would look better. Selectman Trombley agreed that if the Town was carrying money in a budget that shouldn't be there then it ought to be removed as percentages do matter.

## **RECREATION**

Parks and Recreation Director Nicole Bizzaro came before the Board with her 2020 Recreation Department budget proposed at \$121,915.00 which is an overall increase of 9.5%. Most of the increase were in non-discretionary lines. Nicole reviewed the significant changes of the budget with the Board. Ms. Bizzaro said that with the enhanced IT services which came at a cost of \$3,440 was something the Recreation Department never had. The department is looking to be able to have do on-line registrations and payments and to have that they will need to enhance their computer capabilities. The only question came from Selectman Trombley

who assumed that the salary line was up because the increases of last year were rolled into that number. Nicole confirmed that was the case.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the Recreation 2020 proposed budget. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **WATSON ACADEMY**

Director Bizzaro then presented the Watson Academy budget which was proposed at \$30,865.00 a \$235.00 increase which is less than 1%. The major changes were highlighted by Nidole. Cleaning services has been taken over by the staff. There were no questions from the Board however Selectman Belanger highlighted the increase in water and sewer services. Ms. Bizzaro wanted to add that the remaining money in the maintenance line will be expended on repairs to the elevator. Any remaining funds she would like to encumber for anticipated roof repairs next year. Director Bizarro is also hopeful to apply for grants as available.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the 2020 Watson Academy budget. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **TOWN CLERK**

Town Clerk and Tax Collector, Erika Robinson was present to review the proposed budget for Town Clerk proposed at \$150,720 an increase of \$10,885.00 or 7.78%. Selectman Mike Yergeau mentioned that record preservation was something that the Town needed to take care of as it is a requirement to maintain records. Our records date back to 1742. Ms. Robinson said that she had received a quote to preserve all records for \$45,000 but she opted to do so much each year to minimize costs. She has money this year to begin the process and a \$2,000 increase in that line next year to do another book. There was a discussion about how dog fees were handled.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the Town Clerk's proposed 2020 budget. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **ELECTIONS/REGISTRATIONS**

The Board moved on to the Elections/Registrations budget proposed at \$15,485.00 a \$5,100 increase or 49.11% increase. Chairman Munguia stated that the high increase was due to the increase in elections next year, four in all. There were no questions or comments from the Board.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the 2020 proposed Elections/Registrations budget. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **TAX COLLECTION**

The Tax Collection budget was reviewed next which was proposed at \$69,700 an increase of \$3,905.00 or 5.94%. The major change to this budget is that hours were added to an existing clerk and carried over for a full year in 2020.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the 2020 proposed Tax Collection budget. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **LIBRARY**

Chairman John Clark was present to review the Library's 2020 proposed budget of \$205,020.00 which represents a 7.49% increase or \$14,278.00. Chairman Munguia was concerned that enough money may not have been appropriated for water and sewer usage as rates have increased and the library has doubled in size. The Board questioned Chairman Clark if the water and sewer line needed to be increased.

**Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to increase the line items for the Library water and sewer by \$600.00 each for a total of \$1,200.00. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.**

Despite the larger library building which has energy efficient lighting, etc. the Trustees felt a 20% in electrical costs was sufficient. There was minimal discussion about some of the changes such as Media.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the proposed 2020 Library budget as amended. Seconded by Selectman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **HIGHWAY**

Dennis Koch and Dave Reinhold were in attendance to present the proposed 2020 Highway budget of \$1,412,430.00 which is 11% higher than last year or an increase of \$139,950.00. Dennis Koch explained that the salary line included the costs for an additional highway employee. Dave Reinhold elaborated on his need for another person especially with additional duties being put upon himself and his staff. More grass needs to be mowed at Fox Run, Keefe, Safety Complex, etc. In the winter time Dave explained it is getting increasingly more difficult to find snow plowing contractors. There was considerable discussion regarding plowing contractors and use of personnel in general and reducing that line as suggested by Selectman Belanger. There was also discussion regarding the equipment line and the desire to purchase a wheeled excavator. There is money in a capital reserve fund to pay some of the costs. The consensus was to remove money from the equipment line and put forward a warrant article for the excavator.

**Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to reduce the equipment line to \$20,000.00. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.**

While there was no motion to reduce salary lines for snow plowing or overtime the Board encouraged Dennis Koch to move lines around to make it more representative as to what money is paid out for which purpose. The Board will have another look at his budget at a later date.

## **STREET LIGHTING**

Dennis Koch moved on to the street lighting budget for 2020 which is proposed at \$15,500.00 a reduction of \$3,500.00 over last year's budget. Selectman Belanger suggested making a change to the \$15,000 proposal bringing it to \$15,000 even and the \$500 in light replacement hasn't been spent so he suggested reducing that to \$100 and asked for their thoughts. Dennis said that there was some money spent on light replacement. Administrator Dodge suggested that the LED's have only been in since half way through 2018 and there was still was another quarter of billing to go. He felt the \$15,500.00 number was appropriate.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the 2020 street lighting budget. Seconded by Selectman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **HIGHWAY BUILDING**

Next for review was the Highway Building budget proposed at \$9,400.00 an increase of \$700 from last year. Dennis Koch said that the electricity line was increased by \$200 based on current billing. Additionally repairs and maintenance of the building was increased by \$500 as the building is beginning to show wear.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the 2020 Highway Building budget. Seconded by Chairman Adam Munguia. Discussion:** Selectman Yergeau was curious to know the age of the building and future maintenance on the roof. Dave Reinhold said that the roof was metal and in good shape. Selectman Trombley questioned the possibility of going to LED fixtures and lights and did not dispute the \$700 increase. Dennis and Dave said that they had not looked into doing a change and relative costs. Vote called for; Motion carried 5-0.

## **TRANSFER STATION**

The Transfer Station budget proposed at \$432,625.00 was brought up for review. This budget increased by \$10,640.00 a 2.52% increase. The biggest change in this budget is for hauling fees since the Town purchased its own roll off truck last year. Monies saved in that line were reallocated to the truck lease line to pay for the roll off truck. Also added was fuel and maintenance for the new truck. Other changes noted was money for a compactor and can. Tipping fees have also increased as provided in the contract with Lamprey. Selectman Trombley brought up whether or not the compactor could be removed from the budget though he agreed it was needed. Selectman Belanger thought that adding an additional day to be open and added personnel would be a good idea. Selectman Trombley felt that the preparation work (new pad, wiring) could be deferred from this year to the next budget cycle. David suggested pouring the pad for this year and utilizing the old compactor that may not be reliable. Selectman Jordan suggested to spend the \$8,000 for the prep work this year and remove the compactor from the budget. Dennis and Dave would then plan to install the old compactor next year to see if it lasts. Dennis reminded the Board that the old compactor is 32 years old and that there are no guarantees as to how long it will last. Chairman Munguia said that we would then prep this year and hook up the old compactor next year.

**Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to remove the \$25,000 for the compactor from the proposed budget. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Motion by Selectmen Bob Jordan to approve the Transfer Station budget as amended. Seconded by Selectman Mike Yergeau. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **PURCHASE ORDER**

A purchase order was submitted for approval to develop plans on extending the highway building. The vendor is ATS for the amount of \$5,300.00.

Dave Reinhold explained that there are two prices on the purchase order as there will be an addition to the right and left of the highway garage.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the purchase order in the amount of \$5,300 to develop plans for a proposed addition to the highway garage. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.**

After the vote of the Board Selectman Trombley asked if the addition was going to be enclosed or just have three walls. Dave Reinhold said that it would be identical to what they have now including heat and lights.

Selectman Belanger announced that with the changes approved thus far the overall budget dropped from a 7.46% increase to a 7.1%

## **RESIGNATION**

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge brought forward the “change in status” of full-time officer Jonathan Swift. He is taking a full-time position with the Middleton, NH Police Department and wishes to continue in a part-time status. While it isn’t a resignation it does change his status and is supported by Chief Wallace. The effective date would be October 7, 2019.

**Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to approve the status change of Officer Swift from full-time to part-time effective October 7, 2019 and to congratulate him on his Sergeant appointment. Seconded by Selectman Mike Yergeau. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **CONGRESSMAN CHRIS PAPPAS**

The office of Congressman Chris Pappas would like to hold office hours with their staffer, Dalton McLaughlin on Friday October 4, 2019 from 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM at Town Hall.

**Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to approve the use of Town Hall for Congressman Chris Pappas on Friday October 4, 2019. Seconded by Selectman Mike Yergeau. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **INCREASE THE OVERLAY**

Town Administrator Dodge advised the Board that last year’s overlay was \$48,622.00 and in lieu of pending utility cases Town Counsel has recommended that additional monies be put aside. It was suggested that the overlay be \$250,000.00.

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve in increase in the overlay to \$250,000.00 as suggested by Town Counsel. Seconded by Selectman Mike Yergeau. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

### **Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge**

Town Administrator Dodge reminded the Board that he will be away next week and wanted to know if they would like Joyce Blanchard to take the non-public minutes. They agreed that they would like Joyce there for minutes.

Town Administrator Dodge also advised the Board that the Town is getting very near to setting the tax rate and though he did not want to give a number out he believed there would be a high increase.

The Board would like to continue with budget reviews next Monday October 7, 2019.

## **INDIVIDUAL SELECTMEN'S REPORTS**

### **Selectmen Belanger**

Selectman Belanger apologized if it didn't appear that he was alert this evening as he has had little sleep. He reminded everyone that there is a special election next Tuesday October 8, 2019 for State Representative.

### **Selectman Yergeau**

No report.

### **Selectman Trombley**

No report.

### **Selectman Jordan**

No report.

### **Selectman Munguia**

Selectman Munguia advised that Town Administrator Dodge will be away on vacation next week and wished him a good vacation. He also welcomed Joyce Blanchard back as she returns from vacation. He too reminded everyone of Tuesday's special election.

## **ADJOURN**

**Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 PM.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Gregory C. Dodge  
Town Administrator**

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**Adam Munguia, Chairman**

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**Bob Jordan, Selectman**

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**Mike Yergeau, Selectman**

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**Cody Belanger, Selectman**

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**Joe Trombley, Selectman**

**Dated October 7, 2019**