

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE
December 9, 2019**



ATTENDANCE

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Adam Munguia called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM at the Epping Town Hall.

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

INTENT TO CUT

An Intent to Cut for Langdon Construction, Map #21 Lot #8 was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to approve the Intent to Cut for Langdon Construction, Map #21 Lot #8. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

PURCHASE ORDER

A purchase order for rock salt from Granite State Minerals in the amount of \$14,025.00 was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to approve the purchase order for rock salt from Granite State Minerals in the amount of \$14,025.00. Seconded by Selectman Mike Yergeau. Motion carried 5-0.

WARRANT ARTICLE REVIEW

ARTICLE: New Water Treatment Plant and MtBE Water Main Extension

This warrant article is for \$8.5 million for the purpose of designing and constructing a new water treatment plant and to extend the water main to provide municipal water to 38 homes with private wells that were contaminated with MtBE's. Commissioner Tom Gauthier and Facility Operator Jim Pouliot were in attendance to address questions relative to this article. As explained by Jim Pouliot \$5 million of the project will come from Federal and State grants and it is anticipated that an additional \$350,000 of the principal will be forgiven. DES stated they would help pay for the water extension up to 90% but if the pipe size were increased they would not pay for the larger size. Up to 10% of the water treatment facility would be paid for by DES. Also pending is a CDBG grant in the amount of \$500,000. The bond would be paid for through general taxation and not only by the rate payers as has been the case with previous such warrant articles.

Commissioner Gauthier stated that it is a \$8.5 million dollar project that will cost \$3.5 million with the assistance of Federal and State funds and any other funding source that is available. Selectman Trombley asked about the tax impact. It is estimated to be a cost of \$.22 per thousand and if the CDBG grant were not to be approved it would be an estimated \$.26 per thousand. Commissioner Gauthier said that past projects were paid for through users and this project will be paid by everyone. Selectman Trombley wanted to know how this will benefit all of the tax payers. Anyone not on the system who uses a public facility with municipal water does benefit indirectly. The whole commercial area is on the Town system.

Mr. Pouliot said that in 2021 the State will lower the acceptable arsenic levels and when that occurs the Town will probably have to shut down a well and sustaining the water system will be an issue. Selectman Yergeau reminded the Board that the current pilot plant we use to treat water will be unacceptable at some point and can only treat 100 gallons per minute the improvements will bring that to 435 gallons per minute. Getting the capacity to 435 gallons per minute is a long term fix according to Commissioner Gauthier.

Selectman Trombley said that it will have to be explained why the Town as a whole is being asked to support this when a majority are not on the system. Commissioner Gauthier used an analogy that there are taxpayers in Town, himself included, who do not have children in the school system yet they pay for the school system through taxation. The improvement is a direct benefit for uses on the system and an indirect benefit for those not on the system.

If the article were not to pass the State could step in and say we are doing it and could cost the Town the entire amount.

Chairman Munguia said he did not like the idea of the article but said it has been justified and he supports it. Selectman Yergeau stated that this is something that is needed and will provide water and sustain the system for quite some time.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to place this article on the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

Note: A recommendation from the Selectmen will be made once the Water and Sewer Commissioners review it and discuss it.

ARTICLE: Operating Budget

The operating budget of \$9,233,314 as proposed and default budget of \$8,930,189 was discussed. This does not reflect the \$150,000 cut as suggested by the Budget Committee.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to add this article to the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to recommend this article. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Highway Wheeled Excavator

This article is to purchase a wheeled excavator for \$206,900 with \$100,000 coming from the Highway Expendable Trust Fund. This article brought about considerable discussion from the Board and Dave Reinhold was in attendance to address their questions. Mr. Reinhold stressed the need for this equipment as it would make work more efficient. Selectman Yergeau agreed that the equipment would be effective and is needed but he could not support it this year. Selectman Trombley suggested that if the Board were not to approve this warrant then the rental line of the budget should be increased. Selectman Belanger suggested that the Board leave it on the warrant with their recommendation and leave it to Dave Reinhold to make his case at deliberative session.

Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to add this article to the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 4-1 (Chairman Muguia voting nay).

Selectman Trombley questioned why the Board would want to put it on the warrant if they were not going to recommend the article. Selectman Belanger was also concerned about leaving a new piece of equipment in the weather and not sheltered. The Board differentiated between the Town's wants verses need.

Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to reconsider adding this article to the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to remove this article from the warrant. Seconded by Chairman Munguia. Motion carried 4-1 (Selectman Belanger voting nay).

ARTICLE: Accrued Benefits Expendable Trust Fund

This article is to place \$15,000 in the fund to offset costs when employees separate due to retirement or regular resignation. The Town in most cases has to pay out earned time and instead of taking the money from individual budgets it would come from the Trust Fund instead.

Chairman Munguia asked what the balance is from surplus that could be used for some of the articles. That number is an estimated \$180,000.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to add this article to the warrant. Seconded by Chairman Munguia. Discussion continued on the use of the money in this fund. Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to amend the motion to include [money to come from fund balance] which was okay with the second, Chairman Munguia.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to add this article to the warrant and that it be funded with fund balance. Seconded by Chairman Munguia. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to recommend this article. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Town Hall Improvement Expendable Trust Fund

This article is to place an additional \$50,000 in the fund to support projects within Town Hall only such as air conditioning, new roof, etc.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to place this article on the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Discussion was quite lengthy on this article as Selectman Trombley thought that the Town Hall fund was going to be renamed as the "Government Building" fund but that article was removed at a time that he was not present for the meeting. Discussions continued as to the need for a Town Hall fund and a Government Building fund and whether enough money was being considered for the new fund, etc. Selectman Trombley said no proposals were sought for projects at Town Hall. Administrator Dodge said that typically money is put into the fund and as projects surface and decisions are made whether to do them or not based on the fund balance. He continued by saying the new Government Building fund has seed money of \$10,000 and if the Board felt it should be more they could certainly increase the amount. Discussion continued for some time. **Motion carried 5-0**

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to fund the article through fund balance. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to recommend this article. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

This article would increase the fund by \$25,000 to fund equipment purchases for the Highway Department.

Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to place this article on the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to recommend this warrant article. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Watson Academy Repairs Expendable Fund

This warrant article places an additional \$20,000 into the fund and is used exclusively for Watson Academy.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to place this article on the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Mike Yergeau. Discussion continued. Motion carried 5-0

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to recommend this article and that it not be funded through the fund balance. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Discussion continued for some time. Chairman Munguia felt that this article should be funded with fund balance. Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to amend this motion to reflect the use of fund balance. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to recommend this article and that it be funded with the unassigned fund balance. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Recreation Facilities Expendable Trust Fund

The article calls for an additional \$5,000 into this already established fund. This fund is designed to be used at Mary Blair park, Fox Run, basketball courts, etc.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to place on the warrant, to use fund balance and to recommend this article. Seconded by Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Landfill Closure Capital Reserve Fund

This reserve fund was started in anticipated of having to one day close and cap the landfill.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to place this article on the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

Selectman Belanger asked if the fund balance would be used. The consensus of the Board was that it not be used for this purpose.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to recommend this article. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Veteran's Tax Credit

Towns may modify the Veteran's Tax credit to an allowable amount of \$750. It currently stands at \$500.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to place the article on the warrant and to recommend the article. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Service Connected Veteran's Disability Tax Credit

This article would increase the service connected credit for Veteran's from \$2,000 to \$4,000.00.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to place this article on the warrant and to recommend the article. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Combat Service Credit

This warrant article is to establish the "Combat Service" credit which took effect on January 1, 2019. Allowable amounts are from \$50 to a maximum of \$500.00. Administrator Dodge was asked to explain this new credit by Chairman Munguia.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to place this article on the warrant and to recommend the article. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

Selectman Trombley commented that though he is in favor of all of the Veteran's credits he feels that they will have to be thoroughly explained to the voters.

ARTICLE: Blind Exemption

This article would modify the current exemption from \$15,000 to \$30,000.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to place this article on the warrant and to recommend the article. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Safety Complex Renovation

This article was submitted by Chief Michael Wallace. The male locker room needs to be expanded according to the Chief. The \$50,000 is based on loose estimates. Selectman Belanger asked if actual proposals been submitted or plans. Administrator Dodge said nothing has been received to date. Selectman Belanger asked that this article not be acted on. Selectman Bob Jordan stated that the Town Safety Committee had prioritized that a lean-too be constructed to protect people from falling snow and ice and . That cost was \$120,000 and in two years nothing has been done.

Motion by Selectman Mike Yergeau to remove this article from the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: Antique Lights

This article was placed on the warrant to replace the old antique street lights downtown with something new. The \$10,000 would cover the cost of purchasing new lights, running power to them and making them functional again. A resident earlier in the year had asked the Selectmen to consider replacing the lights and offered to help get that done.

Chairman Munguia stated he would really like to see this on the warrant for the people to decide. Selectman Jordan said he has had many people asking him when the lights would finally be repaired.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to place this article on the warrant, to use fund balance and to recommend the article. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Discussion followed; Selectman Trombley stating that though he would like to see the lights replaced, he is focused on want vs. need. He also did not like the heading of "antique light" because it sounded more cosmetic than a safety issue. **Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to move the question. (This motion supersedes the original motion) Seconded by Chairman Adam Munguia. This**

question is non-debatable. Motion carried 5-0. The original question was then called for a vote. Motion failed 2-3 with Chairman Munguia, Selectman Yergeau and Selectman Trombley voting nay.

This article was removed from the warrant.

ARTICLE: Government Buildings Expendable Trust Fund

This article was created to establish a trust fund whereby all Town owned buildings were included with the exception of those that have their own trust funds established. The \$10,000 was "seed money".

There was discussion on the article before it was placed on "floor" for discussion. Finance Director Lisa Fogg spoke of the origin of individual trust funds and said that at one time it was thought of to combine all of the buildings into one fund but this is the first time it made it to the warrant. Selectman Trombley thought that the \$10,000 was not enough because there are at least seven (7) town buildings. Selectman Yergeau thought it was a good start supported by Chairman Munguia. Selectman Yergeau thought it was enough money to evaluate or do an audit of the buildings to see the conditions of the heating system, roof, etc. Selectman Trombley said he could support that but felt another \$5,000 should be added so that there was at least \$2,000 available per building.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to place the article on the warrant, to increase it by \$5,000.00 and that it come from fund balance and recommended by the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

Selectman Yergeau asked if there would be legal assistance at deliberative session to help answer questions about these funds. Administrator Dodge said that he plans on having the Town Attorney present for that meeting.

ARTICLE: Epping Youth Athletic Association

This article has been on the warrant for many years and is widely supported. Sometimes it comes in as a petition or the Selectmen put it on the warrant.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to place the article on the warrant. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to recommend the article. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge

Town Administrator Dodge handed out a list of vendors who have worked on the library project and can now be closed out. He said that he contacted each vendor to make sure no further invoices were due. Selectman Trombley had asked for the list so that he could cross reference with his spreadsheet to see where we were at financially with the project. Selectman Belanger said he has been asking for quite some time where we were on the budget. Selectman Trombley said he had just received the list and would need the next 24 hours or so to see where the project budget stands.

Selectman Trombley reviewed the list with the Board and suggested that the Oyster River bill of \$3,799.50 be paid even though it is beyond budget and to pay Exeter Paint as the contract did state that the owner (Town) would purchase that and said that the Board was not quite clear enough with Mr. Goodspeed on how to procure the paint. The overages in general have been caused by unapproved change orders. He further stated that some costs though unapproved are committed funds and need to be paid. Selectman Trombley made the point that though the Selectmen may not have committed the funds for change orders, their selected GC (General Contractor) did and therefore there is an obligation to pay. Priority of payments would go to AIA contracted commitments first. Selectman Jordan said that he felt if the project could support the change orders then they should be paid.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to pay Oyster River \$3,799.50 contingent upon that payment satisfies the AIA contract and there will be no further billing. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to pay Exeter Paint in full an amount not to exceed \$2,500. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

Selectman Belanger stated that he would like a copy of the final costs for the Library Project once Selectman Trombley has completed the worksheet. Selectman Jordan thanked Selectman Trombley for being on top of the expenses for this project.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to move forward with finishing the stairs inside of the library. Seconded by Selectman Joe Trombley with the amendment that the Town moves forward with installing the covering on the stairs so long that his budget calculations can support that expense. That amendment was okay with Selectman Jordan.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to move forward with finishing the inside stairs so long as Selectman Trombley confirms that it will be supported by the budget. Seconded by Selectman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 5-0.

Town Administrator Dodge finished by stating he has posted a meeting of the Board for Wednesday December 11, 2019 in the event there is a quorum of the Board who attend the Budget Committee meeting that night.

INDIVIDUAL SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

Selectman Belanger

He reminded the Board that he will be coming before the Board for his Home Occupation permit at the next meeting.

Selectman Yergeau

No Report.

Selectman Trombley

No Report.

Selectman Jordan

No Report.

Selectman Munguia

No Report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

ADJOURN

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

**Gregory C. Dodge
Town Administrator**

Adam Munguia, Chairman

Bob Jordan, Vice-Chairman

Mikel Yergeau, Selectman

Cody Belanger, Selectman

Joe Trombley, Selectman

Dated: December 16, 2019