

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE
January 11, 2021**



ATTENDANCE

Chairman Mike Yergeau, Selectman Joe Trombley, Tom Gauthier and John Cody; Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge; Executive Secretary Joyce Blanchard. Selectman Bob Jordan was excused. Chairman Mike Yergeau arrived late.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Trombley called the public meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

ENTER IN TO NON-PUBLIC 91-A:3 II. (a) compensation

Motion by Selectman Trombley to enter in to Non-Public Session in accordance with 91-A:3 II. (a) compensation. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 3-0. Roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to exit the Non-Public Session. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

RECONVENE

Chairman Yergeau reconvened the public meeting at 7:09 PM in the Town Hall meeting room and via ZOOM.

NON-PUBLIC MINUTES

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the non-public meeting minutes of January 11, 2022. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Minutes from the December 27, 2021 Selectmen meeting was submitted for approval.

Payroll Manifest for the pay period ending January 6, 2022 in the amount of \$139,784.26 was submitted for approval.

Accounts Payable Manifest for the week ending January 7, 2022 in the amount of \$1,584,617.56 (\$1,000,000.00 for the school, \$176,846.00 to Primex and \$407,771.56 is for the town) was submitted for approval.

Veteran Tax Credits for maps and lots 030-055-025, 030-049 and 008-014-116 were submitted for approval.

Raffle Permit for American Legion #232 for the year 2022 raising money for Charitable causes was submitted for approval.

Intent to Cut for the Society for the Protection of NH Forests on map and lot 017-004 was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to remove the December 27, 2021 Selectmen meeting from the Consent Calendar. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the minutes from the December 27, 2021 Selectmen meeting. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 3-0-1. Chairman Yergeau abstained.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the remaining consent calendar as submitted. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

BUSINESS

TAX COLLECTOR/TOWN CLERK

Appointment for Michele K. Murphy as Deputy Town Clerk was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the appointment of Michele K. Murphy as Deputy Town Clerk. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

Appointment for Michele K. Murphy as Deputy Tax Collector was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the appointment of Michele K. Murphy as Deputy Tax Collector. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

TRANSFER STATION DISCUSSION

DPW Director Dennis Koch and Road Supervisor David Reinhold discussed the need for a new trash compactor. The order time is 5 months out and they hoped to use the ARPA Funds to purchase one immediately instead of the warrant article in the amount of \$62,500.00. Finance Director Lisa Fogg explained that this purchase may not be covered by the ARPA Funds.

ARTICLE 16: TRANSFER STATION COMPACTOR

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty-Two Thousand, Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$62,250.00) for the purchase of a new trash compactor and receiver box to be installed at the Transfer Station. This will bring the total number of trash compactors at the facility from three to four, helping to reduce wait times at the facility.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend the Warrant Article as submitted. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

WARRANT ARTICLE REVIEW

ARTICLE 5: 2022 OPERATING BUDGET

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amount 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 Ten Million, Three Hundred Ten Thousand, Three Hundred Ninety-Five Dollars (\$10,310,395.00). Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Ten Million, Eighty-Seven Thousand, Two Hundred Eighty Dollars (\$10,087,280.00), 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.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to reconsider Article 5: Operating Budget. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 5: Operating Budget. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 10: RECREATION FACILITIES EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Recreation Facilities Expendable Trust Fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to reconsider Article 10: Recreation Facilities Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 10: Recreation Facilities Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 14: FIREWORKS CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 (Ten Thousand Dollars) to be placed in the previously established Fireworks Capital Reserve Fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to reconsider Article 14: Fireworks Capital Reserve Fund. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 10: 14: Fireworks Capital Reserve Fund. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 17: CONSERVATION COMMISSION EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to establish an Expendable Trust Fund per RSA 31:19-a, for the Conservation Commission, for the purpose of maintenance and improvements to conservation areas and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000.00 (Five Thousand Dollars) to be placed in the fund and further to appoint the Selectmen as agents to expend from the fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised by taxation.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to reconsider Article 17: Conservation Commission Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 17: Conservation Commission Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 18: CONSERVATION QUALIFIED ORGANIZATIONS

Conservation Commission member Scott Pim explained the Conservation Qualified Organizations Warrant Article. This warrant article would give the Conservation Commission the right to expend funds for purchasing properties that the town would not hold interest in. Mr. Pim used the example of preserving land near the Route 87 bridge for the turtle habitat. A contribution was given without rights to the land. If the town had rights to the land it would have public access. In this case the Conservation Commission did not want public access. The other example Mr. Pim talked about was the recent easement on the Clarke Farm most of which is in Newmarket. Having this warrant article approved would have helped the Clarke easement land be preserved faster and the Town of Epping would not have any responsibilities to maintain or inspect the property. A lengthy discussion followed. Selectman Gauthier would like to see if the comment "subject to the approval of the local governing body" could be added to the warrant.

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 36-A:4-a, I(b) to authorize the Conservation Commission to expend funds for contributions to 'qualified organizations' for the purchase of property interests, or facilitating transactions related thereto, where the property interest is to be held by the qualified organization and the Town will retain no interest in the property.

ARTICLE 19: CONSERVATION OUTSIDE MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES

Mr. Pim said this article has never been used. The Conservation Commission would have the authority to expend funds to purchase property with the towns interest. This would have been useful for the Clarke Farm easement. It would have been used to continue trails, water shed and habitat corridors. Discussion followed.

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 36-A:4-a, I(a) to authorize the Conservation Commission to expend funds to purchase interests in land outside the boundaries of our municipality, subject to the approval of the local governing body.

Motion by Selectman Trombley to recommend Article 18: Conservation Qualified Organizations Warrant Article. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 3-1. Selectman Gauthier voted nay. Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge will find out if "subject to the approval of the local governing body" can be added to the warrant article.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 19: Conservation Outside Municipal Boundaries Warrant Article. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 20: BY PETITION - READY RIDES FUNDING

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,500.00 (One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars) for the Ready Rides Program. The goal of Ready Rides is to ensure everyone who resides in any one of our service towns over 55 and/or disabled has a ride to a Medical, Dental, Therapy or any Health-related appointments.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to reconsider Article 12: Ready Rides Funding. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 20: Ready Rides Funding. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 21: BY PETITION: COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S FUND

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00) for the purpose of supporting services provided to residents by the Community Children's Fund (CCF). CCF raises funds that are distributed to families in need in the form of vouchers that can be redeemed at local stores to purchase warm clothing and bedding. The organization also provides direct financial assistance to the schools to help cover student unmet needs.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 21: Community Children's Fund. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 22: BY PETITION: ROCKINGHAM COMMUNITY ACTION

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eleven Thousand, Three Hundred Dollars (\$11,300.00) for the purpose of funding Rockingham Community Action for its work in providing fuel, utility, food, homeless and housing assistance, budgeting education and support to Epping residents in crisis to move them toward self-sufficiency.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 22: Rockingham Community Action. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 23: BY PETITION: WAYPOINT (AKA RICHIE MCFARLAND CHILDREN'S CENTER)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Eight Thousand One Hundred Dollars (\$8,100.00) for the Waypoint's (aka Richie McFarland Children's Center) early intervention program that serves children from birth to three years of age and their families. This investment will support the cost of providing early childhood special education, pediatric therapies and family support services to Epping residents. This past year thirty-eight (38) children and their families were served. This request helps support the annual cost for weekly home-based therapies. Our request is based on the average number of children served over the past 8 years.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 23: Waypoint (AKA Richie McFarland Children's Center). Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 24: BY PETITION: ROCKINGHAM NUTRITION & MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand, One Hundred and Fifty-Two Dollars (\$5,152.00) to enable Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels Program to continue to provide the meal service to older homebound and disabled Epping residents.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 24: Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels Program. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

ARTICLE 25: BY PETITION - CURBSIDE TRASH/RECYCLING PICK-UP

To see if the Town of Epping is favorable in having the Board of Selectmen explore budgeting for curbside pick-up for residential trash and recyclables.

Selectman Trombley stated this could have been discussed at a Selectmen's meeting instead of a Warrant Article. The Selectmen would have addressed the issue then. There was a study done 5 years ago that they could have refereed to also. Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge said the writer of the warrant had developed a budget to cover the cost.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend Article 20: Curbside Trash/Recycling Pick up. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 3-1. Selectman Trombley voted nay.

CANDIDATES NIGHT

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge reported the moderator would like Candidates Night to be held on Tuesday February 15, 2022.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to hold Candidates night on Tuesday February 15, 2022 at the Town Hall at 7 PM. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

DRA SALES RATIO

The DRA Sales Ratio Survey showing the towns ratio for 2021 will be 80.9%.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to accept the DRA Sales Ratio for 2021 as 80.9%. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

ABATEMENT

Abatement for Public Service Company of NH/Eversource Energy for the year 2021 map and lot 023-185 in the amount of \$2,323.00 (exempt State Education Tax per RSA) was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the abatement for Public Service Company of NH/Eversource Energy for the year 2021 map and lot 023-185 in the amount of \$2,323.00. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

Abatement for Public Service Company of NH/Eversource Energy for the year 2020 map and lot 023-185 in the amount of \$2,397.00 (exempt State Education Tax per RSA) was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the abatement for Public Service Company of NH/Eversource Energy for the year 2020 map and lot 023-185 in the amount of \$2,397.00. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Town Administrator

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge asked the Board of Selectmen if they would like to rescind the December 29, 2020 Town Hall Access Plan? All emergency orders have been lifted. Selectman Cody is concerned it is too soon as the numbers for COVID and Omicron are

increasing. Discussion continued regarding sick time, other variants and the earned time policy.

Motion by Selectmen Trombley to leave paragraph #10 of the December 29, 2020 Town Hall Access Plan to be revisited March 1, 2022 and review the existing sick time (PTO) policy. Seconded by Chairman Yergeau. Motion carried 4-0.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge announced Jeanne Shaheen will be at O'Neill Cinema on Friday at 10 AM for the Small Business Association. Mr. Dodge will be attending.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge said the Budget Committee Public Hearing will be held here at the Town Hall tomorrow, Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 6 PM.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge sent his draft of the Selectmen Town Report. Please know edits are welcome.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge reminded everyone there is a list of opened positions. Filing period will be January 19th at 8:30 AM – January 28th at 5 PM. The list is on the town web site.

Motion by Selectmen Gauthier to give a merit increase to the Financial Director. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

INDIVIDUAL SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

Selectman Tom Gauthier

Selectman Gauthier sends his condolences to the Brooks Family. Mr. Jesse Brooks was an outstanding man and he is so sorry for Debbie and the girls.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge talked to Debbie and she has a lot of family support and seem to be doing ok.

Selectman Joe Trombley

Selectman Trombley said the Brooks family has been good friends with his wife for a long time. He is very saddened on the passing of Mr. Brooks.

Selectman John Cody

Selectman Cody would like to have an organizational chart completed.

Selectman Bob Jordan

Excused

Selectman Mike Yergeau

No Report

ADJOURN

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Joyce Blanchard
Executive Secretary**

Mike Yergeau, Chairman

Joe Trombley, Vice Chairman

John Cody, Selectman

Tom Gauthier, Selectman

Date: January 24, 2021