

Town of Epping
Budget Committee Meeting
January 6, 2021

Call to Order:

The budget committee meeting was called to order at 7:00pm via zoom.

Attendance:

Budget Committee Members: Michael Charkowski-Chairman, Steve Ozols, Heather Clark-School Board Rep., Adam Munguia-Town Selectmen Rep., Marty Dyer, Mike Lecuyer, John Cody, Jen Chapman, Marc Nickerson, Greg Dodge, Robert Hodgeman, Greg Tillman, Lisa Fogg and Cynthia Hounam.

Joe Trombley, Amy Hodgdon, Cliff Cray

Opening Comments:

Tonight we will review the town warrant articles.

Motion to approve the minutes from December 16 and December 22 motioned by Heather, seconded by Steve.

Roll call vote: Steve-I, Jen-I, Heather-I, Marc-abstain, Mike-I, Marty-I, John-I, Adam-I, Robert-I, Greg-I, Michael-I. Motion passes 10-0-1.

New Business:

Town Warrant Articles

Article 4: 2021 Operating Budget: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. This article was already discussed and voted on by the Budget Committee 8-3.

Article 5: Police Union Contract: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. Adam said this is only a draft, they will have the final numbers by next weeks public hearing.

- Adam said the evergreen clause was not calculated in yet. They went from a standard pay to a “military” style process to reflect promotions and pay, this is all tied up in the cpi. There are some numbers missing as they had to tighten them up, it took the union a bit to digest everything and that is why it is a draft
- John asked if someone wants to stay a patrolman their entire career does that accelerate pay pertain to them, Adam said yes.
- Heather asked how many police officers this covers, Adams said we have 17 full time officers and it covers 11. Heather asked by doing this and having them have a steeper trajectory on their career will that take more of them off this contract, Adam said no they took the patrolman through the 20 year mark, the acceleration is just their potential not an automatic.
- Heather asked since this is a draft who has not approved it the union or the selectmen, Greg Dodge said both and said they will have those final numbers by next week.

- John asked if there was an evergreen clause in the contract that expired this year, Adam said yes. Greg Dodge it is still part of the contract, they are still trying to figure it out, there is a little more work to be done.
- Marty asked what the evergreen clause is, Adam said in case the contract reaches its end it will continue until you re-negotiate a new contract. Greg Dodge said in the past the evergreen clause was mandated, then no longer mandated but the community can continue if that is something they wanted to do. Two contracts ago the union asked for it to be maintained in the contract, so it is still there. Adam said the reason for the evergreen clause is so they do not work without a contract.

Article 6: Accrued Benefits Expendable Trust Fund: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions.

- Adam asked Lisa if the January 1st retirement was paid out of this fund, Lisa said no there was not enough in the fund.
- Steve asked if the officer that just retired is effective on January 1st, Lisa said his last day of work was December 31, 2020 but for state purposes it was January 1, 2021. Adam asked if he has been paid out, Lisa said on the next payroll. Adam asked if he was being paid out of the merit pool, Lisa said most likely.

Article 7: Town Hall Improvement Expendable Trust Fund: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. Adam wanted to fund it for \$35,000 but did not due to covid.

- Marc asked if this is a tax impact, Adam said yes.
- Heather asked if there was anything specific coming up or just building up the fund, Adam said both, they would like to expand the meeting area and they are really concerned about the emergency escape stairs, they are falling down.

Article 8: Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. Balance \$133,000. Adam said Dave knows what is needed for equipment and is setting aside the funds.

- Joe said the money in the fund is set aside for the wheel excavator. Greg Dodge said it was talked about but he has no record of it being voted on but that is the intent. Greg Dodge said the reason it was not purchased yet is because the town voted it down in the last cycle and cannot act on it until after the first of the year
- Heather asked what was put in last year, Lisa said \$25,000

Article 9: Watson Academy Repairs Expendable Trust Fund: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. Balance \$22,000. Adam said it is an old and historic building and there are mandated things that need to be done.

- Greg Dodge said they are under the lchip agreement that expires this year so they are limited as to what they can do. They used money in the fund this year to do the roof and the next project is new boilers for the building, thinking it may be 3-4 years out.
- Heather asked if they know how much the boilers will cost, Greg is not sure that Joe will help determine that cost, on the short term they would keep it at \$10,000 this year.

Article 10: Recreation Facilities Expendable Trust Fund: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. Balance \$41,000

- Michael asked if this was for something specific or just to build the fund. Adam said both, they are not 100% on board with her next project but she does have a new project, new playground behind the SAU. Adam said if you were like her at the public hearing she will be happy to go over the project. Steve said that would be a good idea.

Article 11: Landfill Closure Capital Reserve Fund: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. Balance \$122,000

- Marc asked if they were given a date yet, Adam said 3-5 years max. Heather asked what the expected rate is, Adam said 4-5 years ago it was \$4-5.5 million, Greg Dodge said the last report did not include pfas and other issues. Marc said this fund has been unfunded.
- Steve said you mentioned coming up with other ways to come up with the money and asked if they thought about raising the cost of the dump sticker, Adam said yes, they talked about raising the dump sticker, setting up funds and putting in a gate so not anyone can dump their trash.
- Joe would like to fund it for more but with \$100,000 this year it will give them enough to start the initial engineering.
- Michael said chances are the \$100,000 will get voted down due to the tax bill increase, might as well make it \$500,000 to raise awareness. Joe would like a high number to raise awareness but also wants to give a number that will get approved to get them started.
- Marc asked which selectmen voted against it, Joe said Cody Belanger stating it was a bad year.
- Steve asked if they have a long term plan for the transfer station, Adam said no.
- Michael suggested to start educating the town of the importance of this project like they did with the water project, Adam said that was a great idea.

Article 12: Government Buildings Expendable Trust Fund: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. Adam said this is for taking care of the town buildings.

- Greg Dodge said this fund was depleted, they have some projects coming up and they wanted to start building it up again

Article 13: Epping Young Athletic Association: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. Adam said this is the only fund that the town does for the youth.

- Steve agrees with this fund wholeheartedly

Article 14: Highway Garage Addition: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions.

- Heather asked if this was the same that was brought forth last year, Adam said yes.
- Joe said it was \$135,000 last year, \$175,000 this year due to materials going up and adding sheetrock and insulation so it does not freeze.
- Michael said he was surprised to see this it was already discusses and he did not want to do it. Joe said the need for the garage will not go away and the materials will only continue to go up, better to do it now.

Article 15: By Petition: New Overhead Doors for The Epping Fire Department and Brickyard Museum: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions.

- Cliff Cray said he worked on this a couple years ago and got a quote of \$5,000, he contacted the salesman who went directly to the manufacturer who kept the price of \$5000. The goal is to have the fire apparatus in the door with a spotlight for the public to view while driving by. If this gets approved, he is hoping to have it done by Memorial Day.

Article 16: By Petition: Rockingham Nutrition & Meals on Wheels Program: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions. Adam asked to table this until next week and maybe gets someone here to talk about it. Greg Dodge said they sent out letters and got no response so we may not get anyone.

- Greg Tillman asked if there anymore petition articles, Greg Dodge said he got 1 more today, Rockingham Community Action. The deadline for petition articles is Tuesday, January 12 at 4:00pm.

Article 17: Change Town Clerk/Tax Collector Assistant Position to Full Time: Read by Steve (attached). Steve asked for any questions.

- Adam said they were asked to put this on a warrant article rather than the budget, so now they are asking the citizens to vote.

Article 18: Motor Vehicle Race Tracks Bylaw Change: was not read as it is not a money warrant article is not voted on by the Budget Committee.

Steve said that is it for warrant articles and asked for any questions.

Greg Dodge said the meeting is in the gymnasium next week and asked who was going to be there in person or zoom. Everyone on committee will be in person, with the exception of Greg Tillman and Robert Hodgeman.

Robert asked what time the meeting is next week, Greg Dodge said 6:00pm. Michael asked what time the deliberative sessions are in February, Greg:

- February 2, 2021 – Town deliberative: 7:00pm at the school
- February 4, 2021 – School deliberative: 7:00pm at the school

Greg Dodge said the MS37 form needs to be signed after the meeting next week.

Heather asked who was up for re-election this year, Greg Dodge said Jen Chapman, Marc Nickerson and Greg Tillman. (3) 3 year positions open for next year. Sign ups begin on January 20-January 29 at 5pm. Adam said there is (2) positions on the board of selectmen

Greg Dodge read all the open positions:

- (2) 3 year position on the ZBA
- (3) 3 year position on the budget committee
- (1) 3 year position on the cemetery board of trustee
- (2) 3 year position on the library trustee
- (2) 3 year position on the planning board
- (2) 3 year position on the board of selectmen
- (1) 3 year term on the water/sewer commission
- (1) 3 year term on the Epping school board

Steve asked if they are going to review the school warrant articles next week, Heather said yes. Heather asked if the school would be first as they are bringing the engineering for a presentation. Michael said the school will be first.

- Steve asked if there were any changes to the school warrant article, Heather said no it is just an opportunity for the public to review and make comments.
- John asked for a copy of the new budget/defaults, Heather will ask Bonnie.

Motion to adjourn by Heather, seconded by Jen. All in favor, motion carries. Meeting adjourned 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Cynthia Hounam

ARTICLE 4: 2021 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, Two Hundred Sixty-Seven Thousand, Two Hundred Ninety-Five Dollars (\$10,267,295.00). Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Ten Million, One Hundred Thirty-Two Thousand, Two Hundred Sixty-Nine Dollars (\$10,132,269.00), 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.

[Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-1]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee 8-3]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 5: POLICE UNION CONTRACT -----DRAFT-----

To see if the Town will vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Epping and the New England Police Benevolent Association – Local #28, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing level:

Year	Estimated Increases
2021	\$31,260.00
2022	\$58,370.00
2023	\$23,190.00

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty One Thousand, Two Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$31,260.00) for the current budget year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increases in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels under the prior agreement. The total estimated aggregate cost for the three (3) years is Two Hundred

Forty Thousand, Eight Hundred Fifty-Five Dollars (\$240,855.00). Note: This agreement has an automatic renewal or “evergreen” clause. If approved, the terms of this agreement shall continue from year to year. The estimated additional cost attributable to the evergreen clause after 2023 is \$ per year.

[Recommended by the Board of Selectmen]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 6: ACCRUED BENEFITS EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Accrued Benefits Expendable Trust Fund.

[Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 7: TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENT EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Town Hall Improvement Expendable Trust Fund.

[Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 8: HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund.

[Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 9: WATSON ACADEMY REPAIRS EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Watson Academy Repairs Expendable Trust Fund.

[Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 10: RECREATION FACILITIES EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Recreation Facilities Expendable Trust Fund.

[Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 11: LANDFILL CLOSURE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Landfill Closure Capital Reserve Fund.

[Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 4-1]

[Recommended Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 12: GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000.00) to be place in the previously established Government Buildings Expendable Trust Fund.

[Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 13: EPPING YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) in support of the Epping Youth Athletic Association.

[Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 14: HIGHWAY GARAGE ADDITION

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (175,000.00) for the purpose of constructing a 50' x 75' addition to the existing Highway Garage. The Highway Garage is located at 129 Coffin Rd., Map 24, Lot 96.

[Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 15: BY PETITION: NEW OVERHEAD DOORS FOR THE EPPING FIRE DEPARTMENT AND BRICKYARD MUSEUM

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) to replace the overhead doors on the 1935 Fire Station, now being converted to the Epping Fire Department and Brickyard Museum. The doors will have windows as they were when this building was an active fire station.

[Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 16: 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.

[Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 17: CHANGE TOWN CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR ASSISTANT POSITION TO FULL TIME

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Thousand, One Hundred Dollars (\$40,100.00) to change the current Part Time Town Clerk/Tax Collector Assistant position to Full Time with benefits.

[Recommended by Board of Selectmen 5-0]

[Recommended by the Municipal Budget Committee]

Majority Vote Required

ARTICLE 18: Motor Vehicle Race Tracks Bylaw Change

1. To see if the Town will vote to amend the "By-Laws to the Regulation and Licensing of Motor Vehicle Race Tracks" as adopted by Article 20 of the March 1971 Town Meeting and amended by Article 36 of the March 1976 Town Meeting as amended by Article 14 of the March 1977 Town Meeting as amended by Article 15 of the March 1986 Town Meeting as amended by Article 18 of the March 1990 Town Meeting as amended by Article 32 of the March 1994 Town Meeting as amended by Article 26 of the March 2018 Town Meeting as follows:

Amend Article IV of the By-Laws which reads, "Sufficient fire protection equipment and facilities as may be required by the Fire Chief shall be provided on the race track premises at the expense of the race track owner and/or operator."

To read as follows:

New Language - "Article IV: Sufficient fire protection equipment, personnel, planning and facilities as may be required by the Fire Chief shall be provided on the race track premises whenever the facility is open to the public and includes scheduled and

nonscheduled events, track rentals, practice sessions and private sessions at the expense of the race track owner and/or operator. Protection, equipment, personnel, planning and facilities shall adhere to all provisions of National Fire Protection Association 610 (NFPA 610) Guide for Emergency and Safety Operations at Motorsports Venues.”

2. Amend Article VI of the By-Laws which reads, “Adequate ambulance service shall be provided on the race track premises at all time during which the race track is open to the general public and/or operating, at the expense of the race track owner and/or operator. In determining what is adequate, consideration shall be given to the nature of the activities being conducted, the number of persons present on the race track premises, and the requirements of the Fire Chief.”

To read as follows:

New Language - “Adequate ambulance service shall be provided on the race track premises at all times during which the race track is open to the public and includes scheduled and nonscheduled events, track rentals, practice sessions and private sessions at the expense of the race track owner and/or operator. In determining what is adequate, consideration shall be given to the nature of the activities being conducted, the number of persons present on the race track premises, and the requirements of the Fire Chief. A Memorandum of Understanding shall be executed annually by the Fire Chief and the race track owner and/or operator detailing requirements for emergency medical services to include transport and standby responsibilities for the ensuing year prior to Fire Chief approval.”

[Recommended by the Board of Selectmen 5-0]

Majority vote required