



## **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**Wednesday, November 08, 2023**

### **ATTENDANCE**

Chairman Michael Charkowski, Vice Chairman John Scully, Members Matt Hehl, Mark Vallone, Jordenne Sargent, and Caitlin McCormack; School Board Representative Robin O'Day; Selectmen Joe Trombley, Pam Tibbetts, John Cody, and Tom Gauthier; Town Administrator Jake Roger; Finance Director Lisa Fogg; Secretary Becca Haggerty. Members Sean Morrison, Jen Chapman, and Cody Belanger were not in attendance.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR THE TROOPS**

### **ROLL CALL**

Chairman Charkowski made record of budget committee members present and those not in attendance.

### **BUSINESS**

Approval of minutes from previous meetings. Pushed to next meeting as minutes are not ready for approval at this time.

With support from Finance Director Lisa Fogg and Town Administrator Jake Roger, Selectmen Joe Trombley, Pam Tibbetts, Tom Gauthier, and John Cody presented the 2024 budget for the following departments:

- Board of Selectmen
- Town Administration



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- Town Meeting
  - Potential to decrease the number of physical copies of the Town Report book could result in a decrease for this item.
- Boards & Commissions
- Town Clerk
- Elections & Registrations
  - 4 elections in 2024 and a new ballot machine impact this item.
- Finance
- Tax Collection
- Treasury
- IT Department
- Property Valuation
- Legal Expense
- Personnel Administration
- Cemeteries
  - 2023 maintenance will be completed in 2024.
- Property Insurance
- Health
- General Assistance
- Patriotic Purposes
- Conservation Commission
- Principal Debt
- Interest Debt
- Planning Board
- Zoning Board
- Town Hall
- Watson Academy
- Safety Facility
- Highway Building



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- Police Department
  - Software associated with police equipment impacts this item.
  - Police union is amenable to possibly joining the town healthcare plan.
  - Police Department will continue to purchase 2 new cruisers - for 2024 one will be funded through their budget, and one through the revolving fund.
- Animal Control
  - Previously covered in the Police Department budget, now standalone.
- Fire & Rescue
  - The group discussed the number of calls the department receives, the turn-around-time between calls and the current staffing situation.
  - Discussion of returns on ambulance services and the benefit for the town.
  - Discussion of retention of staff and the reasons for turnover.
- Building Inspection
- Town Engineer
  - Discussion of the possibility of spreading this item over 3 budgets (Town Hall, Highway Department, and Water & Sewer).
  - Joe Trombley explained the benefits of a town engineer and how this role would provide expertise and avoid possible legal exposure.
- Highway Department
  - Discussed joining the Municipal Alliance for Adaptive Management, a local group which would aid in providing regulatory compliance support.
- Street Lighting
- Transfer Station
  - The group discussed the cost / benefit and increasing complexity of the current recycling program. Some members are in favor of potentially discontinuing the recycling program altogether, at a cost savings for the town. Joe Trombley recommends a possible petitionary warrant article to gauge the town's interest.
- Recreation
- Library



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At present, the 2024 budget is showing an anticipated increase of 12.1%. The 2024 default budget shows an 8% increase.

The group discussed the cost savings associated with the upgrade to LED lighting in our municipal buildings. The Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator are investigating additional ways to save, including switching from oil heating to a more economic option, and combining all buildings into one singular dumpster contract.

The group discussed the benefits of the NH Municipal Association which provides information and classes surrounding municipal positions. There are documents and classes available, and the Association may even conduct on-site presentations to assist our committee members in best serving and protecting the town.

Member Jordenne Sargent exited the meeting at 9:35.

Budget Committee members express thanks to the presenters for their hard work in preparing the budget review presentation for this meeting.

The Selectmen provide insight into the reasoning for the 2024 budget increase and welcome the Budget Committee's feedback and suggestions. Next meeting set for November 29, 2023.

Chairman Charkowski makes note of the upcoming School Board budget review meeting, to be held at the middle school, on November 15, 2023.



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### ADJOURN

**Motion by Vice Chairman John Scully to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mark Vallone. Motion carried 5-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Becca Haggerty

Secretary

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Michael Charkowski, Chairman

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John Scully, Vice Chairman

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Jordenne Sargent, Member

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Mark Vallone, Member

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Caitlin McCormack, Member

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Matt Hehl, Member

Dated: November 08, 2023

*Members Sean Morrison, Jen Chapman and Cody Belanger were not present.*