

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE
October 19, 2020**



**MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
IN PERSON MEETING AND VIA ZOOM FOR BUSINESS
MEETING ID #876 3908 3850
PASSWORD # 699355
PUBLIC COMMENT 608-9508**

ATTENDANCE

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Adam Munguia called the public meeting to order at 7:00 PM at the Epping Town Hall. This meeting was also available through Zoom for Business.

MINUTES

Minutes from the October 13, 2020 Selectmen's meeting were submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to approve the minutes from October 13, 2020 Selectmen's meeting. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

PAYROLL MANIFEST

Payroll manifest for the pay period ending October 15, 2020 in the amount of \$152,472.78 was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the payroll manifest for the pay period ending October 15, 2020 in the amount of \$152,472.78. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 4-0.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE MANIFEST

Accounts payable manifest for the week ending October 15, 2020 in the amount of \$1,471,195.34 (\$1,000,000.00 for the school; \$317,159.52 for the water treatment plant and \$154,035.82 for the town) was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the accounts payable manifest for the week ending October 15, 2020 in the amount of \$1,471,195.34. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 4-0.

EOC CHIEF DEANGELIS REPORT

Chief DeAngelis reported the current numbers for COVID have increased state wide to 1,020 which is 233 more than last week. The numbers haven't climbed this fast since June. There have been 7 more cases in Epping making the total 41. Chief DeAngelis explained the surrounding town numbers have increased making it a concern to the department as they are the clients the department will see through mutual aid. There is one staff member in quarantine until October 23rd.

Seacoast Public Health is looking at the West Epping Station to set up a clinic for inoculations when they arrive. A list of critical employees from each department is being compiled.

Chief DeAngelis shared his condolences with the board about Dick Rodiers mother passing away. She had Alzheimer's and was in a nursing home, it's always sad to lose a Mom. Selectman Belanger added his condolences.

Chairman Munguia is concerned he is seeing less people wearing masks.

FIRE CHIEF LOMBARDO REPORT

Fire Chief Joe Lombardo stated the runs this year made by the department is 1,028. At this time last year they had made 1,017. The trend of making more runs continues every year.

The State of NH is giving out decontamination atomizers to all the ambulance services within the state. Epping will host the distribution of those on Friday or Monday.

BUSINESS

BUDGETS

RECREATION

Parks and Recreation Director Nicole Bizzaro submitted a budget that is \$3,030 more than last year which is a 2% increase. The increase is due to computers and software. Watson Academy is a flat budget.

Mrs. Bizarro explained a "Community Playground" project she is working on. There is a need for a preschool play area during school hours. There is room for the playground on the other side of the tennis courts on town land. She would like to have it big enough to include 30-50 children of all ages and ADA compliant. She is looking into different grants, building phases and hoping to add this to the community in the spring of 2021. After a brief discussion, Mrs. Bizarro was asked by all the Board of Selectmen to move forward with the playground plans and were very supportive.

Pay rate increases for Brett Couture and Kayla McLeod from \$12.00 to \$12.50 an hour and Cassidy Wall from \$10.00 to \$10.50 an hour was submitted for approval along with a promotion for Jacob Grandmaison from Lead Staff to Before School Supervisor at \$13.50 to \$15.00 an hour.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the pay rate increases for Brett Couture and Kayla McLeod from \$12.00 to \$12.50 an hour and Cassidy Wall from \$10.00 to \$10.50 an hour along with a promotion for Jacob Grandmaison from Lead Staff to Before School Supervisor at \$13.50 to \$15.00 an hour. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 4-0.

TOWN CLERK/TAX COLLECTOR

Town Clerk and Tax Collector Erika Robinson explained her budget increases. The Town Clerk Department budget has increased 36% and the Tax Collection Department budget increased 30%. The increases are due mostly to recommending the part time clerk position, held by Michele Murphy, to be changed to full time. Mrs. Robinson defended the increases due to more commercial vehicles, Epping is getting larger and the changes the State of NH DMV and Vitals are making. For safety reasons and quick and easy service there should always be 2 people in the office. As it is now taking any earned time is difficult. Discussion regarding the office impact of the cemetery sales and retraining another part time clerk continued.

FIRE

Fire Chief Joe Lombardo presented a budget with a 12% increase for the Fire Department and a 6% increase for the Safety Facility. The increases are mostly due to salary increases, office equipment, computer maintenance, fire truck maintenance, cell phones, equipment and ambulance maintenance among other small increases.

Selectman Belanger asked Mr. Lombardo to cut all raises in half. Mr. Lombardo replied no, not with all the challenges this year has brought his staff he will defend the raises.

Fire Chief Joe Lombardo explained the West Epping Station has no running well and that will need to be taken care of. Epping Well and Pump has donated a pump when the well is drilled.

INSURANCE RATES

Finance Director Lisa Fogg announced the insurance rates for 2021. Over all the Health Insurance rates for the current plans are increasing 6.4%. Dental, Workers Compensation (based on employee's salary) and Unemployment Compensation rates have stayed the same. Short Term Disability Rates (based on employee's salary) have increased 4% and Property and Liability Insurance rates increased 8.5% was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to approve the new insurance rates for 2021. Dental, Workers Compensation (based on employee's salary) and Unemployment Compensation rates have stayed the same. Short Term Disability Rates (based on employee's salary) have increased 4% and Property and Liability Insurance rates increased 8.5% giving permission to Chairman Munguia to sign the agreement. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

SEWER PROJECT

The engagement letter regarding the sewer lagoon project bond was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to approve the engagement letter regarding the sewer lagoon project bond giving Chairman Munguia permission to sign the document. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 4-0.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Town Administrator

Town Administrator Gregory Dodge reminded everyone that in 2 weeks the General Election will take place, 8 AM – 7 PM at the Middle School Gym. He thanked the Board for spending so much time at the polls last time but they are needed again. The AG's office will be checking the polls. Mr. Dodge repeated Erika's report on 1,200 absentee ballots being sent out with 800 being returned. On Oct 30th they will prepare the absentee ballots for Nov 3rd counting. It is a public event held in the upstairs meeting room from, 9 AM – 2 PM. You will need to wear a mask.

Town Administrator Gregory Dodge explained 2 members of the Conservation Commission appointments have expired. The Conservation Commission are having a Public Hearing on Thursday and would like to be reappointed.

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to reappoint Scott Pim and Dan McCombs for a 3 year term on the Conservation Commission. Seconded by Selectman Cody Belanger. Motion carried 4-0.

Town Administrator Gregory Dodge asked the Board of Selectmen if they were receptive to employees carrying over more than 1 week of earned time (revised policy). Due to work loads, staying home and nowhere to go there are some employees that may lose their earned time. He is encouraging staff to try to take time off but this isn't always convenient with some office schedules. Chairman Munguia would like to discuss this at a later date.

Town Administrator Gregory Dodge said there are only 2 more meeting dates until the budget goes to the Budget Committee. He will bring the library budget and all the small budgets next week. November 2nd will be the last meeting before the November 13th Budget Committee meeting.

INDIVIDUAL SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

Selectman Cody Belanger

Selectman Belanger stated there has been some confusion on navigating the elections, entering and exiting. Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge said he has more signs on order.

Selectman Belanger asked if the Board of Selectmen would like to invite the Representatives and State Senators to come to the Nov 2nd BOS meeting for a short introduction of themselves. After a brief discussion the answer was no, this was not the appropriate forum.

Selectman Mike Yergeau

Selectman Mike Yergeau asked for clarification regarding the W&S Commission presenting their budget to the Board of Selectmen. They will be put on the BOS Agenda for October 26th.

Selectman Mike Yergeau announced the Community Church will be serving a free Thanksgiving dinner on Thanksgiving. Dinner this year will be take out only. Please call 679-5542 to pre-order or eppingcommunitychurch.org for more information.

Selectman Bob Jordan

Selectman Bob Jordan offered his condolences to Deputy Chief Rodier and his family on losing his mother. It is always a shock and leaves a deep impact when they are gone.

Selectman Joe Trombley

Excused

Selectman Adam Munguia

Chairman Munguia attended a meeting at the waste water plan with USDA representatives, W&S Commissioner Tom Dwyer and others this morning. The USDA are using our closing of the sewer lagoons as a model nationally for grant funding because of the solar farm being installed.

Chairman Munguia reminded everyone that Trick or Treat is on October 31st from 5-7. The guidelines are on the town web site.

ADJOURN

**Motion by Selectman Cody Belanger to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan.
Motion carried 4-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Joyce Blanchard
Executive Secretary**

Adam Munguia, Chairman

Bob Jordan, Selectman

Mike Yergeau, Selectman

Cody Belanger, Selectman

Dated: October 26, 2020