

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE
October 25, 2021**



ATTENDANCE

Chairman Mike Yergeau, Selectmen Bob Jordan (arrived 6:15 PM), Joe Trombley and John Cody. Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge. Selectman Tom Gauthier and Executive Secretary Joyce Blanchard were excused.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Yergeau called the public meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

BUDGET REVIEW

TAX COLLECTOR

Tax Collector Erika Robinson reviewed her proposed 2022 proposed budget with the Board of Selectmen. Total budget of \$86,155 a 12% increase over last year. Most of the increase is due to an approved warrant article in this year's warrant to have a third full-time clerk which also included benefits. Ms. Robinson explained the training, professional services, title search, copier lease, recording fees, dues & subscriptions, general supplies, and postage lines. All lines were either flat from last year or had a small decrease. Overall budget was \$9,455 which Selectman Trombley commented can be easily explained to the Budget Committee with an additional employee.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Tax Collector budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

TOWN CLERK

Town Clerk Erika Robinson continued with her review of the Town Clerk's budget which is proposed at \$193,910 or a 16% increase. This increase can also be attributed to the approved warrant article to add a third full-time clerk to that office. More detail was given to the alarm system, training, copier lease (partial in Tax Collector and Town Clerk budget), dues, office

supplies, postage, equipment, records prevention (records from 1800-1900), dog fees, software support and ballot machine programming. The alarm system line was increased by \$1,080 due to an upgraded system.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Town Clerk budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

ELECTIONS & REGISTRATION

Erika Robinson finished her review with the Elections & Registration budget which is proposed at \$14,530. She explained that there would be three elections in 2022 and therefore additional cost in programming the ballot machine, the need for ballot clerks and the costs for meals.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Election & Registration budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

PLANNING

Planning Board Chairman Heather Clark came before the Board of Selectmen to review Planning's proposed budget of \$215,270 which represents a decrease of 2% from last year. RPC's dues increased by \$125 and there was an additional cell phone added at a cost of \$600 for the new Town Planner.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Planning budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

ZONING

Though there was no one present to review the Zoning budget there was no increase to last year's appropriation of \$750.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Zoning budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to enter into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-a:3 II (a) compensation. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0. Roll Call Vote; Selectmen Joe Trombley, Bob Jordan, John Cody and Chairman Mike Yergeau all voting aye.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

At this time the Selectmen reviewed all of the smaller budgets with Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Proposed at \$25,970 which represents an increase of 1% (\$195). Administrator Dodge explained the NHMA dues of \$6500 and the need to increase the advertising costs to post job openings.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Board of Selectmen budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

TOWN ADMINISTRATION

The proposed budget is \$263,570 or a 2% increase over last year. The increase is reflected in contractual obligations and postage machine maintenance which had not been budgeted in previous years.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Town Administration budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

TOWN MEETING

The Town Meeting budget is unchanged from last year and proposed at \$5665. Administrator Dodge explained that the annual report printing represents the Town's share only as the School District contributes as well.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Town Meeting budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

BOARD & COMMISSIONS

This budget was presented as a 50% decrease going from \$1200 in 2021 to \$600 in 2022. Professional services line to pay for the minute taker at the Budget Committee meetings was cut in half by Administrator Dodge. The Selectmen and Finance Director Lisa Fogg felt that there was not enough money in that line and that it should be restored to \$1200.

Motion by Chairman Mike Yergeau to increase the professional services line to \$1200 and make it a flat budget over last year. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Boards & Commissions budget as amended and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

FINANCE

The Finance budget was proposed at \$129,425 representing an increase of 1%. Changes in the salary line make up the increase with modest decreases for office supplies and equipment. A mileage line of \$100 has been eliminated. There was discussion about automating time sheets as explained by Chairman Yergeau and Vice-Chairman Trombley. Lisa Fogg will look into that prospect.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Finance budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

IT DEPARTMENT

The IT budget is proposed at \$49,825 which is a decrease of 6%. Some one-time costs are not part of the 2022 proposal. Administrator Dodge spoke briefly of the "Total Care" contract signed last year to minimize costs when replacing the server or any workstations. Selectman Trombley said that at some point the Board may want to look into hiring their own IT person for Town Hall either on a part-time or full-time basis.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the IT Department budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

PROPERTY VALUATION

This budget was proposed at \$80,250 for 2022 representing a 10% increase. Town Administrator Dodge explained to the Board that he may have overstated the cost of the "Town Assessor". In checking with the Town Assessing firm, reviewing contracts he was unsure how a figure of \$58,500 was reached. That line alone went up by \$9,990. After careful considerations Administrator Dodge recommended that that line be reduced by \$8,500 to read \$50,000.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to reduce the Property Valuation line by \$8,500. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Property Valuation budget as amended and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

The Personnel Administration budget was presented at a decrease of 1% or \$30,100. Pre-employment screening had been reduced by \$200. There was discussion on the merit pay line, perhaps renaming the line to something else. It appears that some expenses should have come from this line but are not shown. Lisa Fogg said most times if that line is used it is not articulated as such and comes from the department line instead. She will review and make adjustments. The \$30,000 figure should remain.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Personnel Administration budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

PROPERTY INSURANCE

There was an increase of \$5000 in the Town's property and liability insurance. Total proposed budget is \$85,000 or a 6% increase.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Property Insurance budget and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

CONSERVATION

The Conservation budget is proposed at \$6,000 the same as 2021. Selectman Trombley who represents the Selectmen on that Board said he had not heard from the Conservation Commission on whether or not their budget number is good for 2022. Selectman Trombley wanted to wait on approving this budget.

TOWN HALL

The Town Hall budget was proposed at \$64,820 (4% less than 2021). Mr. Dodge expressed his concerns regarding the Town Hall's antiquated phone system. The system is obsolete and parts will be hard to come by. Selectman Trombley expressed the need to get pricing for a new phone system and suggested a Voice over IP product. Town Administrator Dodge said he had decreased the "Tax Deed Property Clean Up" by \$1,500 stating that the \$3,000 appropriations had not been used in the past. This generated conversation about setting up a capital reserve fund for that purpose and leaving the \$3,000 in the budget in case the article fails. After a lengthy discussion Town Administrator Dodge recommended that the \$3,000 be eliminated from the budget and that an article be placed on the warrant to create a capital reserve.

Motion by Chairman Mike Yergeau to decrease the Tax Deed Clean Up line to zero. Seconded by Selectman Selectman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 4-0.

The new proposed Town Hall budget being \$63,320.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Town Hall budget as amended and move forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

BUILDING INSPECTION

Town Administrator Dodge stated that the Building Inspection budget increased by 1% for a total proposed budget of \$57,205. This increase was totally driven by an approved wage increase. The contract services line was overspent by quite a bit due to the Building Inspector being out sick for a long period of time.

Motion by Selectman Joe Trombley to approve the Building Inspection budget and forward to the Budget Committee pending final approval of the Board of Selectmen. Seconded by Selectman Bob Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

ADJOURN

Motion by Selectman Bob Jordan to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Gregory C. Dodge
Town Administrator**

Mike Yergeau, Chairman

Joe Trombley, Vice-Chairman

Bob Jordan, Selectman

John Cody, Selectman

Note: Selectman Tom Gauthier excused.

Date: November 1, 2021