

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES  
TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
November 29, 2021**



**ATTENDANCE**

Vice- Chairman Joe Trombley; Selectmen Tom Gauthier and John Cody; Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge. Chairman Mike Yergeau, Selectman Bob Jordan and Executive Secretary Joyce Blanchard were excused.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley called the public meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION, 91-A:3 II (a) dismissal, compensation, (b) hiring, (c) reputation**

**Motion by Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley to enter into non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (a) dismissal, compensation, (b) hiring, (c) reputation. Seconded by Selectman Tom Gauthier. Motion carried 3-0. Roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to exit non-public session. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 3-0.**

**RECONVENE**

Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley reconvened the public meeting at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall meeting room and via Zoom.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to seal the non-public minutes of November 29, 2021. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Minutes from the November 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Selectmen's meeting were submitted for approval.

Payroll manifest for the pay period ending November 25, 2021 in the amount of \$138,869.42 was submitted for approval.

Accounts payable manifest for the week ending November 24, 2021 in the amount of \$2,054,526.62 (\$1,000,000.00-school, \$806,729.00-county tax, \$39,500-Patsy's for recreation bus and all other town expenses \$208,307.62) was submitted for approval.

Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) for Brown Family Trust, map #5, lot #23-0-2 and lot #23-02-3 in the amount of \$32,500 and \$1,500 respectively were submitted for approval.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to approve the consent calendar as presented. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **POLICE**

Chief Michael Wallace came before the Board to speak on purchase order #371 to Atlantic Tactical for two (2) bulletproof vests at a total cost of \$2,163.70. The Chief explained it was to replace two vests that have reached their expiration dates. The Chief explained that the vests are planned for in the budget a year ahead of the expiration.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to approve purchase order #371 to Atlantic Tactical in the amount of \$2,163.70. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **FIRE**

Assistant Fire Chief Joe Lombardo came before the Board to speak on a correction to be made to the Fire Department 2022 proposed budget, specifically the part-time line. He explained that after presenting to the Budget Committee he met with the Chief, Lisa Fogg and the Town Administrator to dig into the detail of the part-time line. It was discovered that certain considerations were overlooked to include funding the administrative assistant position. The number presented of \$338,000 needed to be increased by \$17,000 for a new part-time line of \$355,000. With that adjustment the bottom line is still 1% less than last year.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to approve the 2022 proposed Fire Department budget with the amended part-time line of \$355,000.00 and to forward to the Budget Committee. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **DEFAULT BUDGET**

Lisa Fogg, Finance Director reviewed the 2022 proposed Default Budget with the Board. Selectman Trombley had questions on the police department numbers and Selectman Gauthier had questions on the transfer station numbers. Overall a total of \$96,000 reduction from the 2022 proposed budget. A majority of which comes from the Police Department. The Board felt a more thorough review of the default budget should be made with a full Board present.

## WARRANT ARTICLES

### **ARTICLE : ACCRUED BENEFITS EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND**

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Accrued Benefits Expendable Trust Fund.

Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley mentioned that this article failed last year. The balance is only \$3,000. The number is low and with many proposed retirements coming up it probably would not be enough. Mr. Trombley felt some of the titles of the warrant articles could be a bit misleading to the voters. He mentioned benefits need to be paid back to a retiring employee whether it comes from the accrued benefits trust fund or the budget it needs to be paid back.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to add, “to be funded by fund balance” on the accrued benefits expendable trust fund. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 3-0.**

### **7:15 PM APPOINTMENT – READY RIDES**

Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley invited Tasha Fulwider and Sandra Jones of Ready Rides to make their presentation. Ms. Fulwider gave the Board a full review of what Ready Rides does. The mission of Ready Rides is to ensure that everyone who resides in any of their nine towns and are age 55 and older and/or disabled have a ride to medical, dental, therapy or any other health related appointment. The rides are provided free of cost and the drivers are mostly volunteers. Currently Epping is not one of their service towns and that is their purpose for appearing at the meeting. They would like to have an Epping resident, not necessarily a Selectmen, be a member of their board. After hearing the presentation the Board expressed their support of the program which they found to be worthwhile. Ready Rides is seeking funding for only \$1,500 which is the same that Durham and Newmarket pays. The Board felt that since this was the first time for Ready Rides to come to Epping and ask for funding that they follow the petitioned article process. Vice-Chairman Trombley asked that Ms. Fulwider or Ms. Jones meet with Administrator Dodge to understand the petitioned article process.

## WARRANT ARTICLE REVIEW CONTINUED

### **ARTICLE : 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.

This article passed last year with a current balance of \$20,000. Vice-Chairman Trombley knew there were project still needed to be done. There are leaks in the ceiling that need attention with the roofing company who installed the new roof. Other Town Hall projects include air conditioning (ventilation).

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier made a motion to fund this article at \$20,000 with the money coming from fund balance. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **ARTICLE : 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.

Current balance is \$2,400. It was not on last year's warrant.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to place this article on the warrant with the money coming from fund balance. Seconded by John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **ARTICLE : 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.

Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley said that the intent was to do the boiler project. He believes Director Bizzaro was going to get pricing. The current balance is at \$32,000.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to fund this article through fund balance. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **ARTICLE : 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.

Balance is currently at \$51,000. Vice-Chairman Trombley said that it used to be funded at \$5,000 but was increased last year in support of the playground project which has not been completed. Vice-Chairman Trombley suggested that the money be reduced back to \$5,000 and if Director Bizzaro shows reasons as to why it should not be reduced the Board can consider that at a later time.

**Motion by Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley to fund this article at \$5,000 and that it not be funded by fund balance pending hearing from Director Bizzaro. Seconded by Selectman Tom Gauthier. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **ARTICLE : 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.

This article passed last year and it is known that this reserve fund is grossly underfunded. Current balance is \$223,000. Selectman Gauthier stated that the goal is to at least get to a point where the Town could pay for engineering costs.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to fund at \$100,000, same as last year and that it not come from fund balance. Seconded by Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley. Motion carried 3-0.**

**ARTICLE : 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.

Lisa Fogg said that this article failed last year and has a current balance of \$11. Vice-Chairman Trombley would like to see the title of this article changed as using the name “Government” gives a negative connotation. The trust fund could be dissolved but the money would go into the general fund. The intent of this trust fund is to have money in reserves for all Town buildings. Selectman Gauthier felt that the Town Hall fund could be spent down to zero and then dissolved. Selectman John Cody stating that the same could be said for the Watson fund pending what Nicole might say. The intent is to fund this one article only which covers all of the Town buildings.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to fund this article at \$40,000 and that the money come from fund balance. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

**ARTICLE : 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.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to fund this at the \$5,000 level and that it comes from fund balance. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

**ARTICLE : 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.

This article has failed a few years in a row. Vice-Chairman Trombley spoke with Dave Reinhold and said that at today’s pricing it would be approximately \$250,000. This number seems to be conservative according to Mr. Trombley as some materials are up about 300%. Vice-Chairman Trombley thought we could do the work in phases, such as just the foundation this year. Selectman Cody countered and said the longer the Town waits the higher the costs. Selectman Gauthier felt that the project should be done at one time, “turn key” or not done at all.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to fund this article at \$250,000. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

**ARTICLE : ADDITIONAL FULL TIME POLICE OFFICER**

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-Six Thousand Dollars (\$46,000.00) for the hiring of an additional Full-Time Police Officer including benefits for six months. Approval would call for a total estimated cost of Two Hundred Ninety-Three Thousand, Five Hundred Fifty Dollars

(\$293,550.00) in fiscal years 2022, 2023 and 2024. A total of One Hundred Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (125,000.00) to be funded through an already approved 3-year Federal COPS Hiring Grant, with Thirty Four Thousand, Five Hundred (\$34,500.00) of that for year 2022.

Selectman John Cody and Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley felt the wording of the article was confusing. Selectman Gauthier was unaware that more officers were needed. Depending on the terms of the grant the officer must be retained at the end of three years. Vice-Chairman Trombley pointed out that in a recent conversation with Chief Mike Wallace there was no mention that additional officers were needed. Chief Wallace should attend the next meeting where these warrant articles are reviewed.

No further action was taken on this article.

#### **ARTICLE: CONSERVATION**

Shall the Town of Epping vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 38-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.

Selectman Tom Gauthier said that he was against this article. Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley was unaware of this article. Administrator Dodge said that this was a carryover from last year. The Board did not like the aspect that the Town remains no interest in the property. Selectman John Cody questioned the RSA that is quoted in this article.

No further action was taken by the Selectmen. They would like Conservation to discuss this with the Board.

#### **ARTICLE: PROPERTY TAX DISCOUNT – BY PETITION**

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to authorize the Tax Collector to allow a 2% deduction from property tax when payment is made prior to the due date. It is the responsibility of the taxpayer to take the deduction; deductions not taken by the taxpayer on or before the due date will not be refunded.

80:52 Discount – Any town may, by vote at the annual meeting, direct a discount to be made to those persons who shall pay their taxes within such periods as the town may limit; and every person so paying shall be entitled to such discount; provided, that no discount shall be granted on resident taxes.

Source RS 45:17,CS 48:17, GS 54:17, GL 58:17, PS 60:18, 1925, 61:1. PL 66:43. RL 80:44. RSA 80:52. 1973, 486:7, eff. Aug. 29, 1973.

Selectman Tom Gauthier was against this article as well and questioned how the discounted taxes would be made up. Vice-Chairman Trombley said that the Town would have to budget for the shortfall and consider each parcel. Selectman Gauthier said that this would burden those who paid their taxes through escrow.

This being a petitioned article no changes can be made and no further action was taken by the Board.

## **ARTICLE: QUARTERLY TAX PAYMENTS**

To see if the Town of Epping will adopt the provisions of RSA 79:15-aa allowing towns and cities to have quarterly billings for property tax with payments due on July 1, October 1, January 2, and March 31.

Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley said that he had thought of considering this article stating that to alleviate a large tax payment right before Christmas may be an advantage to the taxpayer. This would allow taxpayers to spread out their payments. Vice-Chairman Trombley did say there was a fiscal impact to this article. Erika Robinson said it could be in excess of \$10,000.

## **INCREASE HOURS AT THE POLLS**

Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley said that he foresees a vote of the Board to increase the hours that the polls are open by one hour. This was agreed upon with last year's petitioner Jen Roy. The Town was waiting to see if there was any movement on a Congressional bill, HR1 that was being debated in Washington. To this date Congress has taken no action. Vice-Chairman Trombley felt that the "will of the people" was to increase the hour which Selectman Gauthier agree with.

## **DPW – HIRES**

Recommendation by David Reinhold that the Board consider hiring Bruce Downing as a seasonal employee at a rate of \$30/hour to plow the sidewalks on an as needed basis with no benefits.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to hire Bruce Downing at a rate of \$30 per hour to be used as need to plow the sidewalks with no benefits. Seconded by John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

It was also recommended to hire Cameron Whitehouse to work three days at the Transfer Station and two days with DPW as a highway laborer. Rate of pay is \$18 per hour, this being a full-time position.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to hire Cameron Whitehouse at a rate of \$18.00 per hour to work full-time (3 days Transfer Station and 2 days DPW laborer). Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **PAY INCREASES**

Recommendation was put forward to approve pay increases for Joyce Blanchard and Phyllis McDonough.

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to approve pay increases for Joyce Blanchard and Phyllis McDonough as submitted with an effective date of January 1, 2022. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **STAR SPEEDWAY SCHEDULE**

The operating schedule for Star Speedway was submitted for approval. Hours of operation are the same as are the dates for the most part. There is a "Swap" meeting added which was not on the 2021 schedule.

The schedule approval is part one of a two-part process where the track will need to apply for their operating license

**Motion by Selectman Tom Gauthier to approve the operating schedule for Star Speedway for the 2022 season. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

## **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

### **Town Administrator**

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge reminded the Board that they will meet with the Budget Committee for the second time on Monday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, the meeting will begin at 6:30 PM. The highway, transfer station, recreation, cemetery and water/sewer budgets will be reviewed.

The tax bills are now out and the due date is on Monday December 27, 2021.

Finally, Administrator Dodge advised the Board that he was behind in getting a detailed organization chart done as the Board requested. He is not sure he will make the December 31, 2021 deadline.

## **INDIVIDUAL SELECTMEN'S REPORTS**

### **Selectman Tom Gauthier**

No Report.

### **Selectman John Cody**

No Report.

### **Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley**

No Report. He did hope that everyone had a good Thanksgiving holiday.

## **ADJOURN**

**Motion by Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman John Cody. Motion carried 3-0.**

**Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.**

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Gregory C. Dodge  
Town Administrator**



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**Vice-Chairman Joe Trombley**

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**Selectman Tom Gauthier**

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**Selectman John Cody**

*Note: Chairman Mike Yergeau and Selectman Bob Jordan were excused.*

**Date: December 13, 2021**